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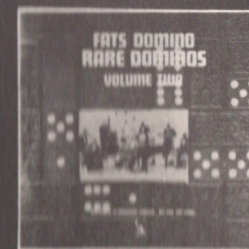


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THE BEST OF WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY

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Lol Coxhill E.O.B



talking to Felix Pappalardi & Leslie West of Mountain

Wednesday, 19th May.

"Felix has asked that questions about Cream be kept to a minimum" David Sandison, Island Press Officer, told us as we slurped coffee in the lounge of the plush West End hotel where Mountain were staying. (£1.04 for 3 cups of coffee and 3 tiny sandwiches... that's plush). We (David, Ray Telford of Sounds, and I) stood out like tramps at the Queen's dinner party, but Felix had apparently only just risen (at 3pm) and the maid was tidying up his room, so we had to hang around for a bit. After half an hour or so, we went up and found Felix (bassplayer, writer, producer, arranger, and leader - among other roles) seated pixie-style on some kind of antique looking chair, and Leslie

(variously described as a "300 lb psychedelic canary", "400lb showman", "500 lb groupie's nightmare" and "600 lb ultimate heavy musician") depressing most of the mattress on a supersoft double bed. Both had obviously steeled themselves for the miserable chore of facing over a dozen interviewers for some 5 or 6 hours.

As it happened, I didn't have any questions about Cream, but I had about 2000 others. You see, Mountain's roots stretch back for years, and I'd spent a bit of time digging out relevant questions... they're a band I can get pretty enthusiastic about, and a band that I want to fill a few pages about, but even so, the interview is necessarily compressed. But start reading on this premise; I really dig

Mountain.

PART ONE: FELIX'S HISTORY

Felix Pappalardi is a walking compendium of the development of rock on the East coast of America. Let's go back to the folk revival/boom peak in Greenwich Village: by summer 1961, the Village's idols were Fred Neil, Dino Valente and Bob Dylan; Richie Havens was just starting to get noticed, Tim Hardin appeared, Jack Elliott returned, Dave Van Ronk and Tom Paxton were there. By summer 1962, the beatnik/folk/coffee house scene had become well laced with protest and drugs - nobody talked of anything except acid and speed. Phil Ochs and John Sebastian arrived. 1963 brought the rediscovery of

Mississippi John Hurt, the appearance of the amazing Holy Modal Rounders, and the arrival of Felix Pappalardi. Time now for a mini-biog: Son of a doctor, born in the Bronx area of New York 31 years ago, studied conducting, musical literature, orchestration, trumpet, viola, and God knows what else at the University of Michigan before he got kicked out, was a military policeman in the army, sold encyclopaedias for three months and then finally got himself together and slouched into the Village.

Felix: The thing that brought me down there in the first place was that all the best musicians I'd ever heard were down there and living within a 20 or 30 square block area of one another. I started just going down there at weekends, then got to staying there overnight and finally left home and stayed there forever it seems like. To begin with I was just playing guitar and singing, then I played a 6 string Mexican bass called a guitarron behind people like Tom Rush and Tom Paxton. I teamed up with John Sebastian and various other people and we became studio musicians for Elektra and Vanguard, as well as accompanying people like Fred Neil in the clubs. It was a great period of time for me - I loved it.

ZZ: Was it good moneywise?

Felix: It was a living... but the thing about it was the experience.

(During his Greenwich Village years, he played on and arranged a great many records (see later for the complete list), but the first instance of one of his songs being recorded was in Mid 1964 when the Village's first electric folk-rock group, the Mugwumps recorded 'Do you know what I mean?')

Felix: I was also signed to Columbia as a solo artiste during that time, but had only one single released - we just didn't get it on - and that was part of the reason that I finally went into production myself... I couldn't find anyone with the feel or technique that I wanted.

ZZ: What were the tracks you recorded?

Felix: One was called 'Love Sunday'... (breaks into laughter) my producers wanted me to change my name to Billy Gleam.

ZZ: Then you did a lot of touring with Ian & Sylvia, which brings us up to mid 66 when you were reputedly working with 'several mid-eastern groups'.

Felix: That's right; I was with a group called The Devil's Anvil (with Mountain keyboard player Steve Knight) which came out of a Village club called the Feenjon. We used to back a lot of well known instrumentalists in that mid-eastern field... great players, some of them.

ZZ: In late 66 you produced the Youngbloods first RCA album (never released here - the fools)... how did you get that job?

Felix: Well, I was on the street... I had been doing things which maybe gave Jesse Colin Young and the guys the impression that I would be good at it. I really loved them; they were such an exciting band then - used to play at the Cafe au GoGo, over the street from the Bitter End - and Jerry Corbitt's voice and Jesse's together were beautiful.

ZZ: Their contract with RCA was a bit of a milestone, wasn't it - they were given more freedom than any other group, which resulted in that album costing 28000 dollars, right?

Felix: Right. Up until that time, people

got rushed in and out of studios, except those old Elektra sessions where musicians would come and stay all night, which enabled us to get exactly what we wanted on those albums. The two unique clauses that the Youngbloods had in their contract were unlimited studio time and their choice of producer... it was unheard of at that time, and this sort of victory over the record company buzzed all over town. I was the choice of producer and used the time as I saw fit... paying no attention to the executives of RCA.

ZZ: Was it so expensive because there were a lot of goofs?

Felix: No no... it was a case of developing it to where it had to be, which I'm still into today - I don't take any notice of the clock... in fact I hate studios which even have clocks... of course, they all do. But I'm in the process of having a studio designed, which I hope will be the best... I'm sure that everyone who builds a studio thinks it's the best, but this one will be for me. I was telling Rick Danko of the Band about it, and his eyes were out here - like basketballs... they have a similar sort of thing up at Woodstock, where they can take a break from the session, open the door and they are in the woods rather than the concrete jungle we go out into. I mean, the Record Plant is on 46th and Broadway... and that's hairy country.

ZZ: Where will your studio be - in Nantucket, for convenience, I suppose? (Felix has a farm in Nantucket).

Felix: Yeah - it'd be in Nantucket, but it wouldn't be particularly convenient... it'd be difficult in fact. But I'm going to give it a try.

ZZ: How are you going to find the time? I mean, you must have been busy when you were producing Cream and so on, but now you're in a band you can't have much spare time.

Felix: In a way I have more time now, because the thing with Mountain is so relatively easy - do you know what I mean? I mean, I love Leslie... we have very few problems and when we do have them, we've known each other long enough to work them out very simply and quickly. The hassles that were always there in my producing days, aren't anymore... so I seem to have more time.

ZZ: Let's get back to your history; I read about a group called Bo Grampus that you were producing in mid 68, but nothing ever appeared - what happened to them?

Felix: Well, I got them to the studio twice; once as Bo Grampus and once as Jolliver Arkansaw... and the Jolliver album was about as far as that group could go... it was them at their very level best, and they broke up straight afterwards. But that album was what finally sucked me and Leslie together, because Leslie played a solo on that last track on side two which killed me... that was it - it was a burner. And he played a burner last night on a session we did for Bobby Keyes' album with Dave Mason and Nicky Hopkins... he played such a burner that we laughed... everyone was laughing.

Leslie (deciding to speak): Listen, I gotta tell you something; Felix taught me how to play studio sessions - to fill holes and to leave lines open...

Felix: Yeah - last night, he was an expert studio musician... and when we were doing the Who sessions too (they're on the next Who LP). You see, Leslie went into the Vagrants when he was at school...

and just playing with 4 guys was a much more rigid situation than studio work, but now he's become a fantastic studio man. We really had a good play with those guys last night. It's something we've always wanted to do - play in London, where you have thousands of musicians... everyone is in London, whereas in America it's so spread out; there's the San Francisco school, the LA school, the Atlanta guys, Memphis, Muscle Shoals, New York, Nashville... but last night... phew! I didn't have any picks with me and had to play with my fingers - I've got a blister the size of a full moon.

PART TWO: LESLIE'S HISTORY

ZZ: Leslie, can we talk a bit about the Vagrants? That was your first band, right?

Leslie: Right. We were all at school together in Queens, New York. I was learning to play guitar, my brother was learning bass, the drummer was learning to play the drums and so on. We were just kids who decided to form a band.

ZZ: I've got two singles by the Vagrants on Atco... were they the only ones?

Leslie: Yeah.

ZZ: When you started in 1965, were you playing the same clubs as the Spoonful, the Strangers, the Youngbloods and that lot?

Leslie: No, we played clubs all over New York and New York State...

Felix: ...but they weren't involved in the scene like those others you mentioned... they just did their gigs and went home to Queens. Everything was still happening in Greenwich Village, which was like a colony for experimenting musicians.

ZZ: The first single 'Respect' was fabulous (it really was - rolling, turbulent, great) - was the producer, Dave Brigati, any relation of Eddie Brigati in the Rascals?

Leslie: He's his brother - so we had the Rascals on that as background singers... they're great background singers. I'll tell you about that record; that was a great record and it could've been a big one if they hadn't insisted on putting it on the b side (the a side was a banal piece of shit written by the producer's publishing company), but I was the only one of the Vagrants playing on that - the rest were studio men - Eric Gale on guitar, Chuck Raney on bass, and Ronnie Roach on drums...

Felix: ...and those guys were the best - Eric Gale is one of the most incredible players in New York, and Chuck Raney was on a lot of those Motown records like 'Baby Love' - really phenomenal playing, just ripped my head off - so those people were a big influence on Leslie back in 1965, and those guys weren't chopped liver, as they say.

Leslie: The producers told the rest of the Vagrants to go and sit in the control room when we got to the studio, and I felt like a fuckin' asshole playing with Eric Gale, who kept looking at me as if to say 'Who the hell is this fat kid from Queens?'

Felix: The first solo I ever heard Leslie play was very weird, but I said 'something is happening', and then he played a solo on 'Beside the Sea' (the b side of 'Sunny Summer Rain' - the other Vagrants/Atco single which came out in 1967), which I played to Van Dyke Parks - and he came right out of his chair; 'Who is that cat?' So I told him it's this young cat from New



York, who sure can play.

ZZ: How did you switch from the 'Respect' type material to the lyrical love/sea/rain/trees/romantic stuff which was on the 67 single?

Leslie: I saw Cream at the Village Theatre... I was on acid at the time. Well, after seeing Clapton, what could I do?... it was either shit, or get off the pot.

ZZ: So you decided on the former?

Felix: He was either going to play the guitar or hang it up, and the change came coincidental with my meeting him.

ZZ: I see that the two songs on that single were written by you (Felix) and someone called Sommer... was that Bert Sommer? (His records never seem to get released over here).

Felix: Sure was, man... far out cat. He had the lead in 'Hair!', but he's getting a little bit carried away... he stares a lot - maybe he's taken one gram too many... but he named the group, Mountain.

PART THREE: THE LESLIE WEST SOLO ALBUM

Note: Leslie split from the Vagrants in 1968 and kept in touch with Felix, who was busy with the last of Cream and various other projects, but they got together in early 1969 to make Leslie's solo album.

ZZ: Who was the drummer on that - N.D. Smart? Was he the bloke in those early Boston groups?

Felix: He was in lots of groups - Barry and the Remains, the Trols, Hello People, hundreds of 'em. I saw him up at Woodstock recently with Ian & Sylvia...

Leslie:... yeah, man, and I saw Colegrove (bassplayer in Jolliver Arkansas) up there too, and he didn't even say hello... looked right in my face. Like I said, I used to be real friends with them and played on their album, but when they saw me playing with Felix and laughing and getting off, all of a sudden they're not friends. Felix stopped paying them after the album, and I guess they blame me for ending their ride... but they used to piss me off anyway.

ZZ: What about N Landsberg, who played the organ?

Felix: He was in a band that Leslie tried to get going between the Vagrants and Mountain. I went to see them and came away saying 'I'm sorry Leslie, but there is no way that I can record that band'... but the next night I played bass with them, and we heard that thing we had together, and Mountain really had to start.

ZZ: How do you rate that album, two years later?

Felix: Well, it was a matter of evolution. Let me put it this way - I love Nantucket Sleighride, if you see what I mean. It's all experimentation.

ZZ: I think some of it stands up still - some are too Creamy, but others, like 'Long Red' and 'Because you are a friend' are really nice. (Note: this album came out in England on Bell but is deleted. The import on Windfall 4500 is still available).

Felix: Right - well I got Leslie out there and he started writing too, which he had never done before. I knew that if he were heard he'd be appreciated and that was my aim - to get him rated as much as I rate him - he's my favourite guitar player... among many I might add.

ZZ: As a matter of interest, Mott the Hoople are going around acting as sort of unofficial publicists for Mountain - they sing 'Long Red'.

Felix: That's really good!

PART FOUR: MOUNTAIN, THE GROUP AND CLIMBING (their first album).

ZZ: Am I right in thinking that Mountain officially started on July 2nd 1969 with you, Leslie, Steve Knight (who knew Felix from the old Devil's Anvil days), and Norman Smart?

Felix: Yes, and then the following September we got Corky Laing in on drums (to replace Smart). He was in a Montreal group called Energy who used to be called Bartholomew Plus 3 - they used to play sweet 16 parties and things like that.

ZZ: How does Leslie get that dulcimer effect on 'To my friend'? (On 'Climbing' LP - out here on Bell).

Felix: Well, it's a twelve string with some sort of weird, bastard tuning, but instead of just recording it straight, we did it on three tracks and mixed it to get the echo effects and the pick noises. It's one of my favourite 12 string recordings - it's a beautiful piece too.

ZZ: Under what circumstances did 'For Yasgur's Farm' come to be written?

Felix: It was written over a long period of time; it was originally an Energy piece of material - from Corky's old band - then it went through changes. We played Woodstock (their 4th gig) and because of the emotional impact it had on us, we sort of changed the words around to fit that occasion.

ZZ: The other one that really intrigues me is 'The Laird'...

Felix: Gail (Gail Collins, his wife) and I wrote that for Eldridge Cleaver... for and about him, I guess - his exile to Algiers, the line that says 'his soul is on paper, published in tears'. In a very unique and strange way, he is a giant hero, as I'm sure you know - he was leader of the Black Panthers and exiled because of what he believes - because, as right as it is, it's extremely revolutionary. We called him The Laird because calling him that is emulatory, and it was that kind of thing.

PART FIVE: NANTUCKET SLEIGHRIDE

ZZ: Can we talk about the title track (of their new Island album)? I assume that having moved to Nantucket, you've become immersed in the history and lore of that area, and that inspired the song.

Felix: Right. Between about 1810 and 1840, Nantucket, along with New Bedford, was the capital of the whaling industry, which collapsed as petroleum replaced oil for burning in lamps and whalebone was superseded in corset manufacture. But the people engaged in whaling were so brave, so incredibly brave; it wasn't like today where they use a huge 80mm cannon - this was a small number of men leaving the mother ship in a longboat, with a harpooner at the front. When that whale took off after being speared with the first harpoon, it was not a sure thing that man would win - and there were lots of cripples all over Nantucket to prove it. (The term 'Nantucket sleighride' comes from the boat being dragged along the wave crests at some 30 mph by the injured whale).

ZZ: The song is basically about the great strength of love that bound the whaling families and enabled them to survive the long periods apart, right?

Felix: I think that's probably the best way to express the theme; leaving your wife and family and all of your friends for 3 years... so brave. It's Gail's lyric...

I really love that one.

ZZ: The song mentions 'Starbuck'...

Felix: He was one of the famous Nantucket captains - he built 3 famous, matching pillared houses on Main Street in the 1820s - one for each of his sons.

ZZ: How did you manage to conjure up that arrangement, which is so appropriate - as well as getting transported into that era, you can almost see the seagulls...

Felix: Well, it happened in the playing - all the guys are so creative. But it was totally written, and we just played it - the result was this feeling that the track has... that's the part of it that has always knocked me out - I can feel the sea spray... I can see the waves and everything. Of course, Bob D'Orleans, who's my engineer, is a brilliant engineer.

ZZ: Who is Owen Coffin, to whom the song is dedicated?

Felix: Owen Coffin... he was in the crew of the ship 'Essex', which figured in the most famous of all whaling disasters. The ship went off in 1820 and was stove in by a whale - it actually turned round and smashed into the hull of the ship. After a day and a half, it sunk, and they were thousands of miles from any place where they could land - not just any land, because there were cannibals and headhunters about then - but a safe place. Well, to cut a long story short, it reached the point where 5 of them were trying to get to land in this long boat, and they had to draw straws to see who was going to die to feed and sustain the other 4... and Owen Coffin drew the short straw.

ZZ: Oh Christ! Did he save the others?

Felix: Yes, he did. They ate him and survived long enough to reach safety. The only one who wouldn't eat him was his uncle - Captain George Pollard, who was the master of the ship. Isn't that unbelievable? I mean, it's so fucking devastating, isn't it?

ZZ: Did they just do him in? Just like that?

Felix: Yes - they shot him - someone also had to draw a straw to put the gun to his head and fire. The Coffins are one of the famous old whaling families of Nantucket. I mean, it's such a phenomenal story that it just hit me like a sledgehammer when I heard it, and I had to read as many versions as I could find - I've read over 30 so far, and I'm still looking for more, just to find out anything else I can about it.

ZZ: How long did the mix take on that track? (To change the subject swiftly).

Felix: Well that one was a very simple mix - the technique I use is that if it's recorded right in the first place, the mix is almost academic.

ZZ: You don't rely on 'fixing' the sounds in the mix?

Felix: Oh no... that's the cop-out... you can't really fix anything in the mix; it's not magic, it's just knobs and dials that do things to the sound you have on tape. Effects are possible - I never put echo on tape because you never know how much echo you're going to need - for placement, for instance.

ZZ: What, for placing instruments in the stereo spectrum?

Felix: Yes - and I see that as from left to right... not just left, right and centre... my stereo mixes are based on that.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



STEWART/BECK/WOOD/WALLER IN EARLY 1968

MY BECK PAGES

Rod Stewart sighed. "He's such a good guitar player... wish he'd give himself a kick up the arse".

Jeff Beck is one of the truly legendary figures in rock, but for a couple of years now, his legend has been rusting up... memories, rumours and fantasies are starting to distort the reality, and Beck is usually depicted either as the amazing guitarist whose brilliance wiped out any competition, or as the irrational bandleader racked by moodiness and indecision. To the current rock audience, he is a name floating around in search of a reputation... his present endeavours revolving around his new band, which has been rehearsing and recording at Island Studios during the past few weeks. We tried to get hold of Beck, but one has to do this through various channels, and, well, you know... negotiations for an interview (if you want to get high-flown) broke down somewhere between his management and the man himself. (Not that I'm surprised or annoyed - Beck must want something new and concrete to talk about, rather than go over the same old ground that he's covered in a thousand

and one interviews before). Anyway, Rod Stewart didn't mind talking about his old group, so he was able to clear up a few queries for us.

Though the records always seemed to fall somewhat short, the Jeff Beck Group (at its peak) of Beck, Stewart, Ronnie Wood and Micky Waller was just totally unbeatable. They didn't manage to achieve national superstar status in England (because they didn't get the opportunity to play here all that often), but they set America on fire: "most of us were just dazed - even the straights... devastating... passing an incredible new number off as a jam... they didn't come on as though they were playing for money, but like they were playing for people... they were unbelievable". The printed praise was seemingly endless... but the group was buffeted by turbulence through most of its 2½ years.

Right. First a precis of Beck's history (see ZZ 19 for Rod's): The Yardbirds, which he joined (from the Tridents and session work with Jimmy Page) in March 1965, when Clapton left to join

Mayall, was his "15th group". (I can't remember where I read this, but it seems a little exaggerated in view of the fact that Beck brushes away his pre-Yardbird days as being of no consequence at all). He named Ian Stewart, the Stones' roadie, as the person who originally turned him on to Chicago Blues and ideas of bottleneck playing. As a matching-suited Yardbird, he played a Telecaster; "I don't think I'd play anything else now", but within months he had switched to a Les Paul. His publicised 'likes' and influences ranged from Howlin' Wolf to Julie London, via Cliff Gallup (of Gene Vincent's Blue Caps), and his plans for the future included a solo recording of 'Summertime' and leading a big band with 3 guitars, 2 basses, 2 drummers, trumpet, trombone, etc. At the end of 1966, he was slung out of the Yardbirds, having just been voted the country's number one guitarist in one poll, and intimated that his future lay in films, though ambitions included co-producing with Phil Spector, sitting in with Ray Charles, and working with Ike & Tina Turner.

According to Beck in an interview

we did with him in August 1969 (when, I might add, he was the ultimate in friendliness – not a trace of this moodiness one hears about), he just packed up playing altogether after the Yardbirds...."I didn't even touch my guitar, and when I came to play again, I was hopeless, but I started to do session work again with Jimmy Page". That didn't last long, because a few weeks later he released his first solo single 'Hi Ho Silver Lining' – a piss-take song about plastic hippie chicks – backed with Jimmy Page's 'Becks Bolero' – featuring Beck, Page and Keith Moon. The single was cut under the direction of Mickie Most and "I was a star again; I didn't dislike the tune and I tried, but playing my style across a song like that just doesn't make it". Aesthetically, maybe not, but commercially it did – Beck was number 8 on the charts and a regular on Top of the Pops for a few weeks. But he needed a band to consolidate and capitalise on his success, and that was the start of his troubles.

ZZ (to Rod Stewart): Am I right in thinking that the first Jeff Beck Group was you singing, Beck and Ron Wood on guitars, Jet Harris on bass, and Viv Prince (in between gigs with the Pretty Things and Denny Laine's String Band) on drums?

Rod: That's exactly right...nearly. What happened was, we rehearsed first of all like that down in a place in Goodge Street, but for one reason and another (do you detect a spot of censorship here?) Viv and Jet couldn't make it, so that never came off. So, after a bit of deliberation, Ron switched to bass and the next drummer we had was Roger Cook (now with Blue Mink) – but he didn't stay long enough to do a gig either. Then we had a guy called Rod Coons, then Aynsley Dunbar, who really established the band

and helped get it off the ground, then Micky Waller, and finally Tony Newman. So there were 6 drummers altogether.

ZZ: I remember seeing Aynsley playing with you at the Windsor Blues Festival in 1967, but I don't remember those other two – what happened to them?

Rod: We just rehearsed with Roger Cook in a little studio, but before we did a gig, he went and this Rod Coons arrived. Well, the first gig we ever did – in early 1967 – was in Finsbury Park, and he just froze completely and couldn't play, so he had to go. I don't know what happened to him... it was a real shame actually, because his old man had bought him a brand new drum kit for the tour, and he was sacked the first day. Very sad.

According to Rod, his involvement with Beck came out of sympathy for him; "we thought we'd better help him out....I mean, for a guitar player like that to come out with a thing like 'Hi Ho Silver Lining' – it was a crime".

The formation of the group didn't stop the commercial singles however, and the follow up was a Graham Gouldman (he wrote the first Yardbirds' hits) song called 'Tallyman'. Most played the demo to Beck, who "didn't say anything, but just left it up to Mickie's judgement. I made the record and sort of closed my eyes". The song was cretinous – "shoes and socks, pretty frocks in the latest styles" – but both the Beck arrangement and the guitar were beautiful....some of his best work in my opinion – staggering stuff. Rod didn't agree; "that was the worst of the three", he said, scarcely controlling a sneer as he sung a line or two of it.

The b-side, 'Rock my plimsoul', was more indicative of the band as it was

then – Beck, Wood, Stewart and Dunbar – and Rod agreed that it was great, "but I really hate talking about those days"... the days of trying to thrust Beck to teeny bop stardom via hit 45s.

Shortly after that, Dunbar left to form his Retaliation and was succeeded by Micky Waller, who featured on the next, and last, single, 'Love is blue'/'I've been drinking'. 'Love is blue' was little short of diabolical – the sort of crap you're forced to listen to during the ice-cream flogging interval in suburban cinemas. What could Beck have been thinking about? Well, of course, the idea didn't stem from Beck's mind, but from that of Mickie Most, who, as producer, controlled his material selection.

"Mickie Most, let me tell you", Beck told us (in August 1969)... "all he wants to do is make hit records, and all I want to do is play my music. When 'Love is blue' was recorded, he was terribly difficult to work with – he really let me know who was boss. But when he went to the States and saw us play, and realised just how huge the market was, he did a big swallow and said "what have I been doing all this time?" And now, he's a lot more lenient as to what material we record; in fact, he's enjoying what we're doing now. He was going to invent an elixir for eternal life – you take a spoonful for breakfast and it makes you last forever. He hasn't invented it yet".

I also seem to recall Mickie Most saying that he was donating a proportion of his income to the Government as his contribution to the Back Britain campaign. But anyway, Most wasn't bothered what went on the b-sides, so they were consequently much better. 'I've been drinking again' had Hopkins on it (before he joined the group) and Madeline Bell, and is just beautiful...beautiful piano, beautiful sing-



Photographs of Stewart and Beck are hard to find, but here is one taken in early 1968. (courtesy Vibrations)

Rory Gallagher



- 31st QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL/LONDON
- * JUNE 3rd GUILD HALL/SOUTHAMPTON
- 6th JAZZ CLUB/REDCAR
- 7th CIVIC HALL/WOLVERHAMPTON
- 9th FOX'S AT THE WINNING POST WHITHAM/TWICKENHAM
- * 11th CITY HALL/NEWCASTLE
- * 12th CITY HALL/SHEFFIELD
- * 13th FAIRFIELD HALLS/CROYDON
- 16th MEMORIAL HALL/BARRY

NEW ALBUM
RORY GALLAGHER



* WITH JELLYBREAD
NEW ALBUM
65 PARKWAY



MARKETED BY POLYDOR RECORDS

ing, beautiful guitar... beautiful.

(Around this time, I remember seeing the group with a different bassist - Wood was ill - but Rod remembers no other bass players except Dave Ambrose, playing with them).

The magnificent 'Truth' album came out during their first American tour and was immediately put down by Al Kooper in Rolling Stone. Beck wasn't worried... "from the articles of his I've read, he talks out of his arse", but successful as it was, he reckoned that it was just sort of thrown together and included a couple of filler tracks just to make it a reasonable length. Rod held the album in higher esteem, though he agreed that they just went into the studio and bashed down a load of tracks that they'd been playing for almost a year - "but I really dug it at the time... even 'Greensleeves'".

Even so, the album came nowhere near to realising the pure amazement of their live gigs during that year of 1968.

Towards the end of the year, Nicky Hopkins, tired of reading the dots in the studio, decided to go out on the road with a band and chose Beck's in preference to Led Zeppelin, who had apparently offered him more money, but then, almost a day before an American tour in February 1969, Beck fired Wood and Waller - and that was the first nail in the coffin. "Their playing had deteriorated", Beck was reported as having said at the time.

This happened at the time when 'Beck Oia' was being recorded and came as a shock to Stewart, who seemed to think that Beck was behind Wood's removal and Hopkins had pushed for Waller to go. "Oh dear... silly boy, he really was... he's really got to go to get another band as good as that". Too true, mate.

In March 69, Beck, Stewart and Hopkins flew to the States to pick up the partly cancelled tour and took with them two replacements - Tony Newman (ex Sounds Inc and session man - now with May Blitz) on drums, and a bassplayer called Douglas Blake. After one gig, in Virginia, Blake was sacked and Ronnie Wood was rehired and flown out. Rod: "By that time, Ronnie was well pissed off and from then on he just used the group as a filler whilst he looked for another band".

ZZ: I read an interview with Tony Newman where he said that nobody in the band was happy with the way it was going. Is that right?

Rod: Yes it is. The band was together, it was a great band to be in, the music was great, but it was everything that went with it... the aggravations and unfriendliness that developed. It was getting too ridiculous for words towards the end when we were trying to escape from each other all the time... one would stay at the Hilton and the others would stay at Hotel Third On The Bill around the corner.

'Beck Oia' came out just as the group was breaking up finally, and this was the first record to acknowledge the fact that it was The Jeff Beck Group, rather than just Jeff Beck. The album was patchy, to say the least, and it was basically recorded to cater for the US sheep audiences - the group was under the impression that a rock'n'roll revival was about to sweep America and cut the appropriate songs.

When we interviewed Beck in August 69, the group was just dwindling apart. Nicky had left for the California sunshine and Ron Wood had found a gig with the Faces. Beck, however, hadn't

informed (and seemingly had no intention of informing) Tony Newman that his services were no longer required. "You ought to tell him Jeff", his girlfriend was saying... "Oh he'll find out" said Beck. Meanwhile, the big Beck plan was to reform with Rod and two members of the Vanilla Fudge - Carmine Appice on drums and Tim Bogart on bass. At the time, Beck was unwilling to divulge their names, because it was still a secret, but he brimmed with enthusiasm; "I nearly fainted on the floor when they phoned up"... he was totally flabbergasted by the tribute and honour he felt these cats were paying him. I think his adulation was a bit misdirected, because they couldn't hold a candle to the Newman/Wood rhythm section... and the Waller/Wood combination would have pissed on them.

ZZ: The end of the group was a very indecisive affair... it just fizzled out.

Rod: Yes - we just sort of floated apart really - I was worried about various things like management, the future, and Ron Wood had gone, which choked me off because we were getting some nice things together. As it happens, I wasn't really knocked out by the things the Fudge were doing at the time, though Carmine and Timmy were two incredibly nice guys. When a group breaks up, the usual line to come out with is 'we couldn't have gone any further musically'... well that's a lot of bollocks - me and Beck could've played together for years and still come up with nice stuff.

So, on October 25th 1969, Disc confirms the news that Rod Stewart had now officially joined the Faces along with Ronnie Wood, and that Beck was getting together with Appice and Bogart. But, it was never to be - as Carmine Appice relates in this excerpt from an interview which appeared in the New Haven Rock Press:

Carmine: When me and Tim left the Fudge, we were going to get a group together with Jeff Beck and Rod Stewart, but their managers weren't going to go through with it. See, Jeff wanted a group to compete with Led Zeppelin because he was mad at them for taking his thing and popularising it and taking all the credit. So he was bitter and wanted to form a group, rather than Beck and his boys, but the managers weren't going to make as much money. Then Beck got in that car crash. (Which is true enough, though Carmine & Timmy had already joined Cactus by then).

NHRP: I heard that Beck did some Motown work....

Carmine: From what I understand, he just went there to cut an album with some studio cats but didn't like the way it came out and he's not going to release it.

Well, that's one version - I've heard other stories, but since we couldn't get Beck to corroborate or deny rumours, that'll have to suffice as an explanation. But one thing we do know - Beck caused the Fudge to break up.

ZZ: Is it right that the Fudge split up because you wiped them off the stage one night and they just felt they had to give up?

Rod: So they say, yes. We did a gig in New York which ended up in what they call 'The nine man jam'; the stage was full of people including Bonham, Page, Beck, me and Plant, and the guy who used to play bass with Jethro Tull - we were doing 'Jailhouse Rock', and it was fucking incredible. I finished the whole thing by shoving a mike stand up John Bonham's arse and he got arrested - the

cops pulled him off and I ran away... we were all pissed out of our heads. And the Vanilla Fudge couldn't follow it on... just couldn't, and they packed up that night. A few days later, Carmine and Timmy got on the phone to Beck and said they wanted to form a band, keeping me on as well.

Though Stewart admired Beck tremendously as a musician, the group was a disaster socially. Rod admitted that in the 2½ years he was with the band he never once looked Beck in the eye... he always looked at his shirt or something.

I asked him if Beck was as directionless as it seemed - whether Stewart was in fact the pilot.

Rod: No - I think he gave me as much direction as I gave him. In the early group, Dunbar used to lead if anyone did - most of the ideas came from him - and then towards the end, Tony Newman came out with a lot of ideas... like the original 'Plyth' was his idea, though it was me and Ron's chord sequence, etc.

Well, as Carmine mentioned, Beck was involved in a car crash, went to do some recording in Detroit, which didn't work out as planned (though one track may get released), he heavied up Donovan's 'Barabajagal' (again under Most's direction), and he has apparently spent most of his time since then in search of a new band. He got Birmingham drummer Cozy Powell fairly early on, but has literally been combing the globe for a singer and a bass player. Snoopy (see else where in this issue) said he went for an audition with a vocalist who said he had rehearsed with Beck and got the boot... reckoned he was one of a number. But as mentioned earlier, it seems as if a new Jeff Beck group is at last a reality and that Beck is satisfied with Clive Charman on bass and Alex Ligertwood singing.

Rod became remorseful and sighed once more; "I've said so many nasty things about Beck and yet they're fucking true... but it's very easy to kick someone when he's down, do you know what I mean?"

"But he'll be up again in a couple of months - he's got a new band".

"No chance. Woody saw him the other night (this was at Easter) and you know what? He had the cheek to ask him to join him again!"

So, make what you like of that... but pray that he gets off again this time; I really miss Jeff Beck. Mac

Records:

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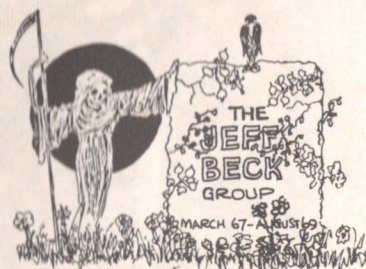
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Beck Oia

SCX 6351

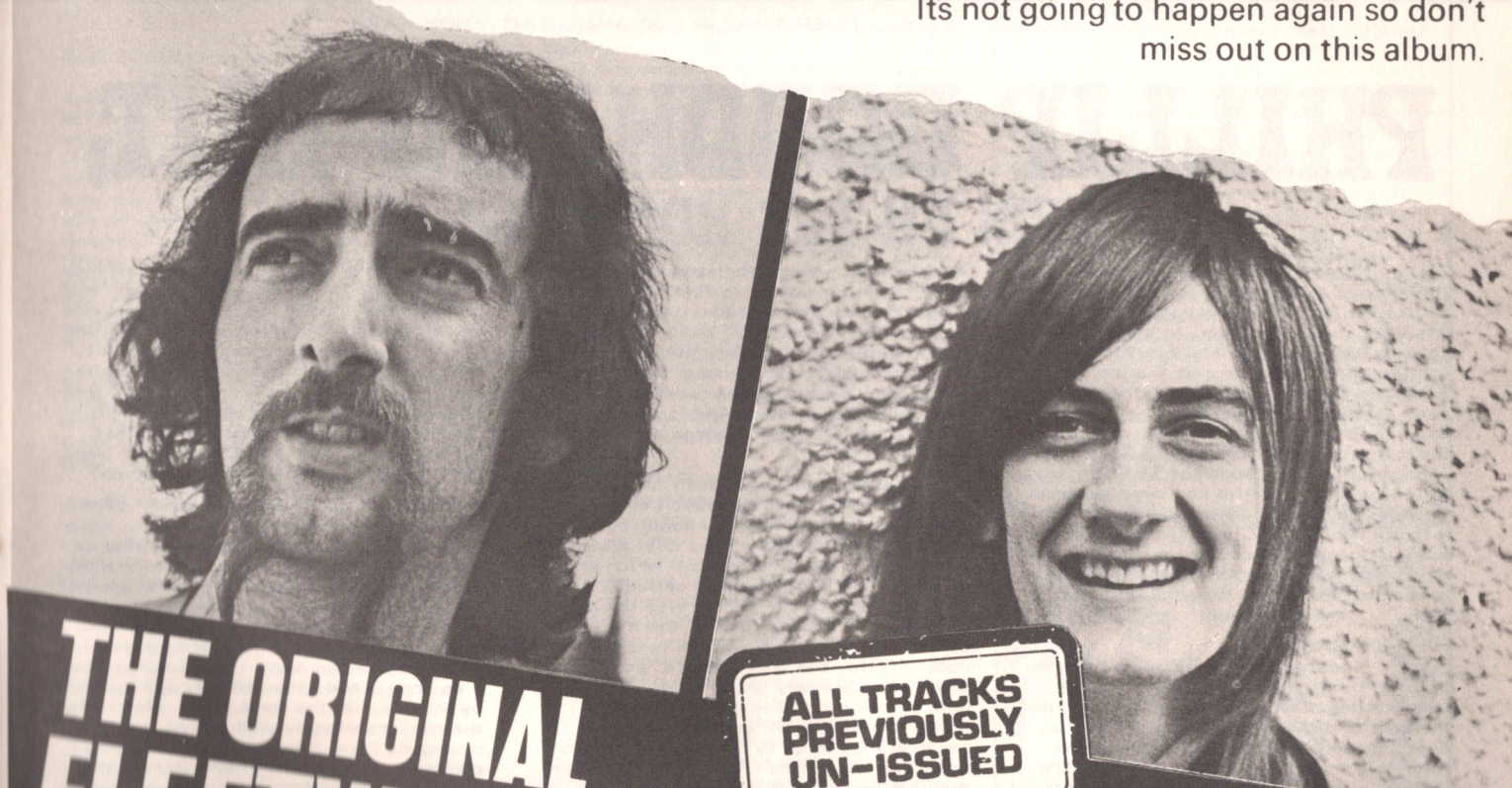
See also Sounds Talk-in in their May 1st issue, where Beck is interviewed about his new group, his past and his future.



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PHILLIP GOODHAND-TAIT: BACK ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Nostalgia often strikes me as I'm listening to some new hope, and I find it difficult to do other than recall my youth, misspent some might say, at the Marquee, Crawdaddy, Flamingo and Eel Pie - alas all now changed in name or musical policy. With this in mind, it's very refreshing to meet someone who shared those turbulent days, as Phillip Goodhand-Tait certainly did, when he did black-gloved Gene Vincent imitations as leader of The Stormville Shakers. Phillip has emerged from those smoky cellar days and, via several slightly dubious and happily past ventures, has just gone on the road again with a fine crisp band whose approach to their music endeared them to me immediately I saw them. I asked Phillip to talk about....

HIS NEW GROUP

"I went through the usual period of advertising for people, but it wasn't very successful - I couldn't seem to find the sort of players I was after. But, as coincidence would have it, a short time later this trio from Guildford called The Brew visited DJM Records (his label) to try and interest someone in their songs. The guy here who listened to them thought the group was good but that the songs did not quite have the spark or whatever, and suggested that they came into the studio to record some of their newer material.

At this point, the guitarist said they'd like to do that, but wanted to find a pianist/singer before they felt like getting too tied up with recording. Well, that was it - a sort of natural move - they were on the look-out for a front man, and I was looking for a band, so we worked it out. The guitarist is called Andy Latimer, the bassplayer is Doug Ferguson and the drummer is Andy Ward.

Our stage act doesn't include much from my first album, because I made that before I joined up with the band, but we do most of the things off the next album which we've just finished and which should be out in a few months; it's called 'I think I'll write a song', which is also the title of one of the songs. One of the tracks is called 'Medicine Man', which is a bit of rock'n'roll. The only trouble is that these days, nearly every group finishes its act with a rock'n'roll thing, but they're all doing it badly as far as I'm concerned, because they stick to 'Blue Suede Shoes' and other standards of the late fifties, and they just don't come near the originals. So we tried to get round that by writing an original rock'n'roll song, but trying to make it as much like, say, a Little Richard song as possible.

Before we joined up, the group was starting out as a heavy three piece

- sort of Free style, I suppose - and they were finding the going a little tough, and because they're all good musicians, there wasn't a lot of satisfaction in it for them either. So they were very agreeable to turning down and playing through smaller amps, the result of which places the emphasis on clarity and melody rather than volume. It makes a change from these groups who are always after bigger amps, more volume, more stacks, and so on."

'CHILDREN OF THE LAST WAR' (The first track on his album).

"It's a song about people like me who were born in the last war - the kind of music we've listened to and the environment we've been brought up in. What inspired the song, strangely enough, was travelling to Guildford (where he lives) on a 715 bus one day. It's a long journey - an hour - and I thought I'd pass the time by talking with the conductor. He started the conversation by saying that it would be a good thing if hanging was re-introduced (it was a topical news item at the time). I started arguing and disagreeing and he got really uptight until he started on about how much he hated long haired people, how much he approved of corporal punishment - and I just couldn't believe that people like him existed. He told me he'd been a dog handler in the police, and

how he'd once had to track down a child raper. We all know that a child raper is pretty low, but surely you've got to believe in the courts and justice; not him - he let his dog loose on the guy and wouldn't call it off... he was really proud of this - said he'd do it again. Well, I was so distressed by this that I thought the only hope we have is if people of my, and subsequent, generations think differently. Anyway, out of all that came 'Children of the last war', which has the piano introduction from 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy' as a sort of indication that it's aimed at those people who, like me, grew up during the era of records like that".

HIS FIRST ALBUM

"The major difference from the next album is that the first was done without the band and was recorded as long ago as last August using session musicians like Dave Richman (ex Manfred Mann), Brian Cole and Barry Morgan. I didn't play any piano on that one either, which is the other big difference. I've played piano on the odd session before and I've been criticised for bad timing and things, but the real reason is that regular session men don't really like playing with un-regular session men, if you see what I mean... it's a bit or a closed shop.

I included 'One Road' because it's the only one of those Love Affair songs I wrote which I can identify with and honestly say that I like. There was some pressure put on me to record some of the others, but most of the pressure, or advice rather, was the other way: "don't worry about commerciality - do what you want to do". But I feel that 'One Road' stood up OK, and I wanted to do my own version anyway.

On the next album, I'm playing on every track as well as singing and the band is on every track except one. On the whole, I feel much more involved in it".

THE STORMVILLE SHAKERS

"When we signed with EMI, it was during the time when the great thing was to have a record contract. It was pretty one sided but we didn't care at the time; it was a lease deal... we paid for and arranged studio time and presented them with the masters, so by the time the stuff was actually released, it was about 6 months old. We went through a lot of hassles and only managed to put out three singles - we couldn't afford to record an LP. But we did do a live album with Larry Williams when he came over to tour England.

Our name came from an old album by Johnny & the Hurricanes - the sleeve shows the band sitting on top of their van, and there's a signpost pointing to Stormville... we all thought it was a really great name at the time.

We spent a lot of time playing at places like the Flamingo and the R&B clubs around the country; Rik Gunnell was our agent and he just about controlled the whole scene in those days - John Mayall, Georgie Fame, Zoot Money... and we were the bottom band. We got some pretty rotten gigs, but there again, all the other bands could blow us off the stage - and that included Geno Washington and his Ram Jam Band. But in those days, us white singers weren't allowed to dance around like Geno Washington did, or like vocalists do now... all the top singers like Eric Burdon, Cliff Bennett and Chris Farlowe used to stand dead still, or just sway a little bit, as they sang.

Those were the days when we had to smuggle booze into our dressing room at the Flamingo and pour it into coke bottles before we went on stage - all very

exciting and very illegal. Times change. It was the era of R&B allnighters, and one of the top bands was Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds with Albert Lee, who invariably passed out during the night, on guitar and Hughie Flint on drums."

LARRY WILLIAMS

"When he came over to tour, he hadn't recorded for years. He'd started out in 1957 on Specialty Records - to try and emulate Little Richard's success and had had several fairly big hits in America, but when he came over here, he was into slower, more melodic stuff, and we made a couple of albums with him - one on Decca and one on Island. He had a lot to offer, I always thought, but he seems to have vanished completely now.

Mike Vernon produced the Decca album - he was a £10 a week Decca bloke in those days - and Guy Stevens did the Island one - I think it was his first production job".

CIRCUS

"Circus sort of grew out of the Stormville Shakers. I did a couple of singles with them and then left, just before they did their Transatlantic album. Two of them were very jazz influenced, and I was very much into rock - so I never really fitted in and eventually decided to go. They tried to get another singer when I went, but then chose to concentrate on the music and do the vocals themselves. They never really got going, I'm afraid, and they split up... Mel Collins joined King Crimson a bit later, so you can see how our directions varied. I was holding them back musically when I was with them I suppose".

DICK JAMES MUSIC

"I signed up with them as a songwriter without really knowing anything about the workings of a publishing house. This guy suddenly appeared with a contract and assured me that signing it would be to my advantage - so I put all my faith and trust into him and signed my name. It's worked out very well as it happened, although it needn't have done... I don't think they made very strenuous efforts over the 6 years I was with them to get my songs recorded - but they had the Beatles on their books too, so they weren't exactly pushed for bread. But being with Dick James has been a good thing for me on the long run - my involvement has been very gradual, and now I'm recording for them. I had a lot of success with the Love Affair songs, and I must say that Dick James was very fair - he shared the profits of the successful songs, when he had no legal reason to... he's a fair publisher".

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

"In the past I've been handled by agents who are more interested in the quality of their desk and carpet than they are in the music, but this agent we've got at the moment is just the reverse. His office is just one uncarpeted room at the top of a tatty flight of stairs, and he puts all the money into pushing his bands - he works bloody hard at it too. At the moment we haven't got too many gigs because we're only just starting out, but the future looks good. The money is laughable at present - we were on a percentage deal at The Country Club the other night and came away with 30 bob between us... but the money really doesn't matter at this stage - the thing to do is just go out and play, have a good time doing it, and try to establish ourselves". John

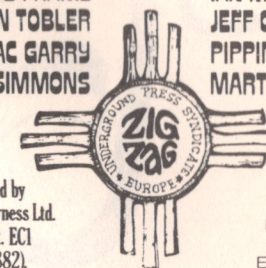
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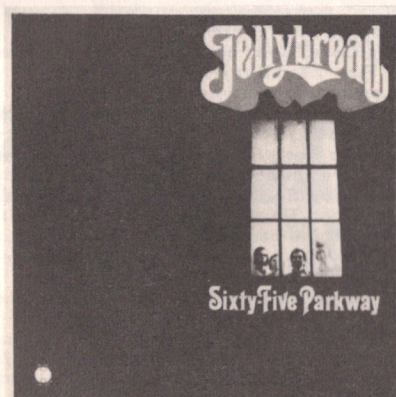
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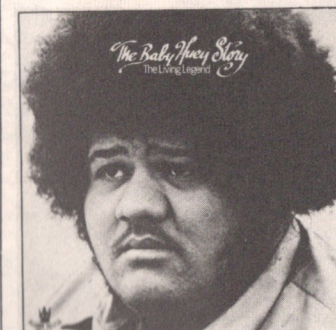
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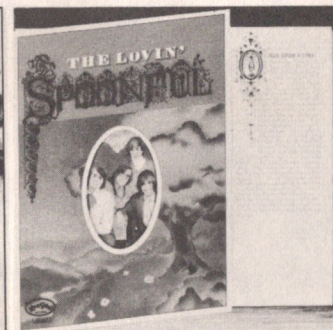
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The J. Geils Band

If you don't have the J. Geils Band album, don't try to talk to me about what's happening.

The roots of what is now known as the J. Geils Band can be traced to Worcester, Massachusetts and a jug band called "Snoopy And The Sopwith Camel". Worcester is like any number of faceless semi-cities in the Bay State (places like Fall River, Springfield and New Bedford): depressing municipalities living in the shadow of faded industrial glory; the kind of places you live in only until you can scrape together busfare to Boston. It was here that J. Geils began picking up on the blues (probably because there was nothing better to do

in Worcester at the time), a direction inspired by the disintegration of the jug band, joined in his pursuits by young Danny Klein and Magic Dick.

The early summer of 1967 found them escaping the Worcester stranglehold into the fast-flourishing electric blues scene of Boston/Cambridge. They gained modified houseband status at the Unicorn, a folky club experimenting with the possibilities of electric music (both Jefferson Airplane and Spirit made their Boston debuts there). The J. Geils Blues Band at this time consisted of J. on lead guitar, Danny on bass, Dick (who now called himself "Pittsfield Slim") on harp and vocals, and a tall dude with an extravagant mustache, whose name is now lost, on

drums and vocals. At that time they were undoubtedly the finest juke-box bluesband in all the land. They didn't mess around with anything too original, preferring straight-from-the-shoulder renditions of blues standards spearheaded by the fine lead work of J. They were not particularly exciting as stage performers, but to a Boston community just beginning to explore the intellectual possibilities of the black man's blues, the J. Geils Blues Band as a definative blues primer was an instrumental tool in shaping a musical consciousness.

At approximately the same time in Boston there was a band known as the Hallucinations. Like the J. Geils Blues Band, they were into black music far





deeper than vogue superficiality. But where the Geils outfit concentrated on blues along purist lines, the Hallucinations were involving themselves with the comparatively more showy aspects of rhythm & blues (one of their very best songs was "Heatwave"). What they lacked in technical polish, they more than made up for in energetic funk. Hallucinations shows at the old Tea Party have achieved a very special place in Beantown folklore, for they combined rousing funky music with a stage show which can only be described as contagiously outrageous.

The Hallucinations were led by guitarist Paul Shapiro and crazed vocalist Peter Wolf. Wolf, at that time also a late-night purveyor of r&b delights on local rock station WBCN, was the closest thing Boston possessed to a resident rock and roll maniac. While everybody else in sight was stuck on the lethargies of acid-rock and the like, Wolf just got up there and shook his ass like a madman. To many he was more than strongly reminiscent of Jagger, but he was one of the few around to exude a directly physical appeal, a precious commodity indeed in those cerebral times.

A few brief words should be said about the Boston rock scene in this period. While the MGM "Boston Sound" fiasco tended to concentrate on a series of opportunist readymades (under the assumption that California-styled market transplant in the East), there was a very viable scene already existent (albeit not in terms that recording industry magnates could fathom). In keeping with the relaxed life-style Boston affords, her music scene was built upon a loose comradeship of musicians, a collective of people who played and hung out together simply because it felt good.

Bands like The Remains (there's one for you to check out, Lester), The Lost (whose bassist, Walter Powers, now plays in the illegitimate Velvet Underground), The Barbarians (who, sans Moulty, moved west and became Black Pearl) and the Ramrods refused to trade in their brand of good-time, get-down music for more commercially viable academic castration. They played for their audiences, not exclusively for themselves, in a hard-and-fast manner suited even to dancing. (Let it be remembered that California hated the Beacon Street Union because they

played *hard rock*!) They built their reputations, whether in friendly ballrooms like the Tea Party or distant lounges like the Saxony, on their ability to show the people a good time. The J. Geils Band evolved out of a scene based on these principals; principals they have thankfully never stopped operating under.

At this point in time we now have the J. Geils Blues Band and the Hallucinations both gigging on the New England rock circuit, drawing generally good response wherever they played and not pushing especially hard for instant international fame and fortune. Both groups were approached by little men with pushy cigars during the "Boston Sound" thing, but both very wisely let it pass. The entire set-up just didn't feel right, and neither was going to jump before they felt secure with themselves. While both bands had very attractive musical facets which could have made them a potentially viable product, both also possessed certain unresolved weaknesses and a great capacity for growth which only time could iron out. Yet the strengths of the J. Geils Blues Band and the Hallucinations seemed to compliment each other, and a fusion of the two bands seemed like sure-fire dynamite. Which happens to be the way things worked out.

J. and Dick happened to be hanging out at the Club 47 in Cambridge (perhaps the finest folk club this country has ever seen; it was forced to close in 1968 due to operating costs and performer's fees a small club just couldn't handle, but in its illustrious history it nursed Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Tom Rush, Jim Kweskin, Tim Hardin, David Blue and innumerable other folk luminaries through the breast-feeding stage in their development) on a night when the Hallucinations were performing. Having had problems with drummers and vocalists, it took them little time to pick up on the obvious talents of Wolf and drummer Stephen Bladd. The Hallucinations were in the process of calling it quits, and Wolf and Stephen soon found themselves in the company of J., Dick and Danny in the revitalized J. Geils Band.

Under the new alignment, things began falling into place. The technical mastery of the old Geils outfit was treated to the dynamic spark so sorely missing in their formula, while Wolf found in his new comrades a necessary musical solidarity (which, in turn,

disciplined him) on which to base his funky antics. Seth Justman was lured away from school by our band of renegades to do the keyboard honors, rounding out the sound perfectly. What emerged was a rambunctious amalgam of blues heritage, rhythm & blues inspiration and good old rock and roll zippity-doo-dah.

Now it might have been perfectly natural to assume (and many people, myself included, did) that the J. Geils Band would burst forth from Boston to wreak vengeance upon all those anemic sissies who were dominating the musical spotlight in early 1969. Such was not the case. They did manage to gather a contract from Atlantic records, but various attempts at recording fell short of the expected mark; things didn't mesh, it still didn't feel right. In this respect it is nearly impossible to over-praise the band: they steadfastly refused to put a product out on the market until they were completely satisfied with its representative value. Still, as the band's gigs began cutting deeper and deeper into core audience response, people began getting more and more impatient for a record. Boston rock station WBCN had the infamous J. Geils "bathroom tapes" (that were almost exactly what the name implies) and a tape of their performance at Alternate Media Conference at Goddard College, but these hardly sufficed. In the waning weeks of 1970, however, peoples' patience was rewarded — the long-awaited album from the J. Geils Band was finally delivered, and the results more than justified the extended waiting period.

I have to admit that the album, titled simply *The J. Geils Band* (Atlantic SD-8275), surpassed even my considerably high expectations. The entire album, I'm told, was cut in a mere three days, with little or no overdubbing or special effects. It manages to capture the good get-down vibes of their live performances (it was cut live in the studio, the only way a band like this could go), but under the expert hands of veteran R&B producers Dave Crawford and Brad Shapiro, the recording is crystal clear. And the band, as Ronnie Hawkins might say, is tighter than a twelve year old virgin.

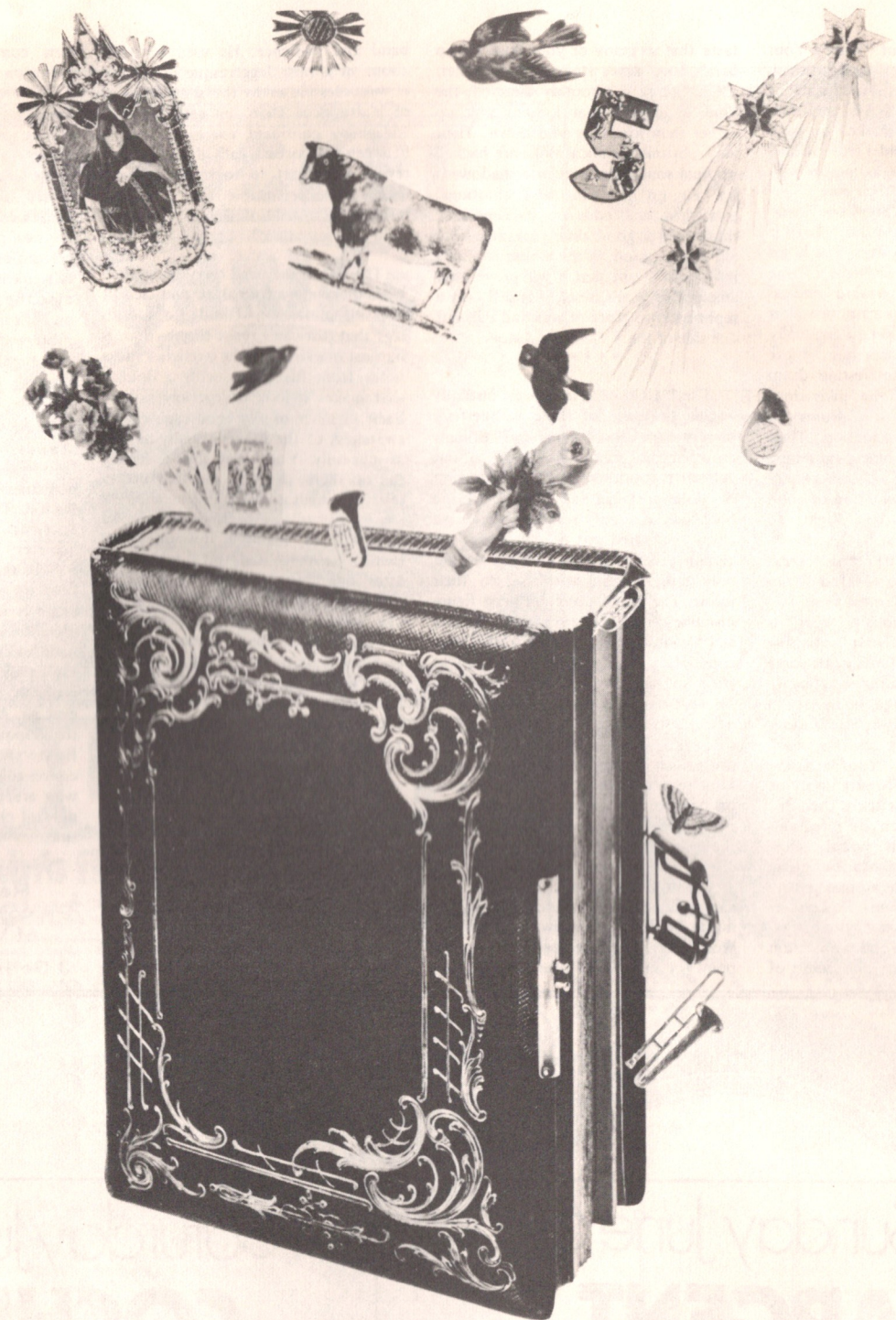
One look at the cover and you know what's happening with these dudes: faces staring out in black-and-white indifference, all leathers, shades and

self-confidence. If it wasn't for the facial hair you'd swear that you had stumbled into the bar that served as hang-out for the rival gang from the other side of the tracks way back in the Fifties. The music they play is just what you'd imagine at this point — tough, uncompromising funk virtually unaffected by the love generation and false narcotic gods. They should do the sound track for the movie that Sha-Na-Na only hints at.

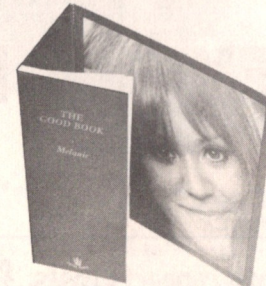
Perhaps the most impressive thing about this album is the smooth diversity the band displays. In their early stages, the J. Geils Band, for all their technical competence, were mired somewhat in a largely derivative stance. This record attests to the fact that those days are in the past, and has much to say about individual identities as it does about a collective approach. It could be called blues, it could be called R&B, it could be called rock and roll; I prefer to call it good energetic music and leave it at that. They spent their formative years absorbing the best of all these musics and the sound they have distilled is truly their own.

The development of J. Geils borders on the unreal. Always a fine blues lead guitarist, his scope has widened and his role expanded greatly in the last two years. His leads possess a textural dimension they lacked before, and his rhythm work is aggressively effective. Peter Wolf, who always had the right phrasing and moves, now has the poise so necessary to a good lead singer. Danny Klien's bass is not always as pronounced as it could be, but this is at least partly resultant from his solidarity with drummer Stephen Bladd. I had had strong reservations about the functional logic involved in having a harp player who does nothing else, but in this respect Magic Dick has shut my mouth. He has done more to develop the use of the harmonica (he fills both lead and rhythm roles, and as a more-than-acceptable horn substitute) than anybody, Butterfield included, that I've heard in recent memory. Seth Justman's keyboard role is rather understated, but he compliments the bottom beautifully, and I look forward with pleasure to more spotlight time for his piano work.

"Homework" and Smokey's "First I Look At The Purse" (the two sides of their single) show what they can do with cooking R&B. Both move on a solid Geils/Magic Dick rhythm track, perfect for dancing and nearly



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impossible to resist. But "What's Your Hurry", penned by Wolf and Justman, shows that they are fully capable of creating their own R&B tradition. Indeed, the album is marked by both vigorous treatment of older material and an impressive ability to come up with equally fine material of their own.

Albert Collins' "Sno-Cone" and Geils' "Ice Breaker" are examples of the band's instrumental prowess. The latter must rate (especially in light of the Cream-inspired trend toward endless monotony) as a brilliant instrumental; it is compact (3:24) yet individually illuminating, and features one of the most intelligent and interesting drum solos to come down the pike since Ginger Baker made the drums an instrument of dull destruction. Their natural affection for bluesy-up-tempo ("Cruisin' For A Love", "Hard Drivin' Man") is offset by a rendition of John Lee Hooker's "Serve You Right To Suffer" that moves well despite its comparative length (5:01) and a great Wolf-Justman thing called "On Borrowed Time" in the ballad vein.

For my money, though, "Wait" is probably the album's best cut. The opening piano riff is fused with some marvelous Geils rhythmical funk, while the rest of the band supports in tightly moving fashion. It features Wolf at the height of his vocal streetcorner cool, and "The bartender says you're disengaged" must surely be instant classic in the poetics of rock. It's the kind of song, with its infectious melody and tough vocal, that encourages bedroom rock star sing-along fantasies when nobody is around.

Though this album displays as high-energy a conception as you'll find, their years of practice and application have ingrained a polish and sense of

taste that so many of your bust-em-up bands have never stopped to consider. Their energy is smoothly directed; the kind of energy that loosens you up rather than knocking you down. Their very obvious technical skills are backed up (and sometimes even overshadowed) by an enthusiasm and emotional awareness that adds up to super-fine music and a good time guaranteed for all. But as good as the album is (and I have little doubt that it will prove itself among this year's best), it is still only a representative piece of wax and tells but one side of the J. Geils Band story.

The J. Geils band in concert instantly recalls the aura of those wonderfully sweaty high school gyms and stiflingly crowded bar scenes that marked our collective youth. No mere re-enactment of stale nostalgia (as constituted the body of the recent "revival"), they have always operated out of the belief that certain principals from that era are not only still relevant but *basic* to their music. The J. Geils method must figure prominently in any discussion of music as "resensification", for while they consciously encourage open response to their music, they promote a joyous inter-action with their audience that outdistances the simple hand-clapping and murmured "far-outs" which distinguish contemporary rock reaction. Dancing and jiving, laughing and singing, on occasion even joining with the band on-stage in boisterous communion; these have long been the welcomed effects of the J. Geils experience.

Over the past years, the band's show has made strides to match that of the music. Performing has always been Peter Wolf's forte, and he serves as primary point of energy transfer between the

band and audience. He used to strut about in almost Jaggeresque pose, but now comes closer to the shuffle-bomp of a drugstore Dion: an easy flow of engagingly confident energy. His raps between (and occasionally during) songs revive a lost art in rock; his humor, being both personable and personal, reflects the casual intimacy of the entire band's presentation.

The rest of the band carry themselves with the same informal air and lack of pop-star pretension. Old J. Geils, with legs that just can't resist the rhythm, is musical maestro, and he wrenches those notes from his guitar with a fluidity that makes it look deceptively simple. Each member of the band registers an awareness of the others visually as well as musically. You know they're having fun up there, dammit, and that makes resistance high impossible. I mean, how can any self-respecting hipster be expected to maintain his ultra-cool (which he cultivated, no doubt, only after long hours in front of the mirror and endless Bogart flicks) in the face of six men so obviously enjoying themselves and, what's worse, going out of their way to provoke the audience into the same frame of enjoyment. (And, after all, aren't rock and roll stars supposed to act detached, indifferent, and even downright aristocratic. This sort of thing is liable to undermine the very foundation of 1960's rock and roll.)

The music is always solid. A standard J. Geils Band set will give you all your favorite tunes from the album, and considerably more to surprise and delight. They pay ample tribute to their root affections (J. is particularly fond of Otis Spann, Wolf possesses every R & B single issued since 1896), they introduce

new compositions (the Wolf-Justman team, on the basis of the album alone, will no doubt keep us supplied with killer music for quite some time to come), and they throw in left-field presents just to keep you on your toes (I am told they are considering "Wooly Bully" for that special J. Geils treatment). But despite their loose physical presence, the music and show are professionally oiled for machinegun movement. That they have found an effective translation of their funky excitement into a thoroughly professional context attests to the fact that the time they took getting here was more than well spent.

The Boston Tea Party is no more. It stands orphaned and alone on Lansdowne Street these days, another permanent fixture in the nostalgia of Boston. That other Boston fixture, the J. Geils Band, is very much alive, however, and firmly a part of the present that the Tea Party just couldn't keep up with. Like Boston itself, they make a name for themselves in their own solid, though admittedly hardly neon spectacular, way. If you've got the ears, they've got the music, and that's probably as far as a J. Geils hype will ever go. And that's good. Judging from the response they appear to be getting, Boston is going to have to make concessions to ears all over the country who are picking up on her most solid musical citizens. Which, I think, is just fine.

Written by Ben Edmonds
Reprinted from Creem
Photo by Steve Snodgrass
of Vibrations magazine

J Geils album: 2400 105.

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WILD MAN FISCHER

I hope Wild Man Fischer never has to grow up. I hope he can just go on doing his thing. Just exactly what that 'thing' is, I can't say. Certainly it lives inside him, down in the heart of all things. His career began, I believe, at Sorrento Beach, a littered piece of beach in Santa Monica. Larry Fischer was trying to make it with the pretty, sun-bronzed high school kids. He was shy and he sang. It was what he did, and he grunted and groaned louder than anybody, and made everybody take notice of him. He was committed to a mental institution twice. He just wanted to sing. He sang for change on the streets of Hollywood and made a double album for Frank Zappa. The record ('An Evening With Wild Man Fischer') is a razor-edged, flipped-out, beautiful document of the times when rock music was the great dream, and when Larry Fischer lived it. He wanted to make music and he liked by people. He's taken a lot of shit. For his story, listen to the record. This is just to tell everybody that Wild Man's still around and dreaming. Wild Man Fischer is one of the complete originals of rock 'n' roll. He isn't just another pretty face.

James Roark

At a little before noon, on a muddy January day, the door banged open without having been knocked on. There was a fiery, wiry, wild-eyed young man standing in the door. "What do you want?" he asked. "Why do you want to interview me?" He whirled around, on guard. He shook his head, blew a long sigh, until he was nearly breathless. "Come in, Larry." I said. He smiled, and said, "All right." Wild Man Fischer came in, sat down, and faced me sleepily.

I put two or three questions to him. Wild Man answered them coolly. Something was wrong. I forgot the interview and immediately things loosened up. You can't prepare any questions for Wild Man. You don't interview him. You experience him. So I experienced him.

"You want to know the truth about me?" he demanded.

I nodded; I told him I didn't know much about his early life.

"Fuck it," said Wild Man. His face changed while we talked; there was a sort of eternal moonlight in it.

"What's important is that I'm managing myself." He spoke impatiently. "There's no one managing me. Herbie Cohen gave me a written release. I lost it but that's cool." He looked at me fiercely. "You don't know him, do you?" I shook my head. "You sure?" I shook my head again. Larry calmed down. "He thinks I'm crazy. And he doesn't like me. I'm afraid of him."

He started whispering to himself. Then he shrugged his shoulders, stroked his wide chin, and his thoughts drifted back slowly.

"I'll tell you how I got started," he said suddenly. "I was trying to sing in nightclubs. The Trip, The Whisky. They threw me out, wouldn't hire me. Zappa was going around town, trying to make it. I met him at the Hollywood Ranch Market and he tried to get me on MGM Records. They turned me down too."

He sat in the sunshine that fell through the window. "How did I get started?" he asked. "Zappa saw me around five years later. He gave me \$20 and I walked over to the Whisky and did a gig and Frank told me to come over his house the next day. He made an album with me."

Larry closed his eyes. When he opened them, he asked me, "Did you ever hear my album?"

"Yes."

"Did you like it?"

"Yes," I said.

"It was a good album," he agreed. "I could have made a better album if I made it myself. It had too much talking. Otherwise it was all right. People don't want to hear talking; they want to hear music."

"Do you think that Zappa was trying to exploit you?"

"I'm not sure. Sure Zappa was trying to exploit me for his own benefit. But he did like what I was doing, or he wouldn't have done it. Would he 've?"

I shrugged. Larry got up and jerked his leather vest for emphasis. "I mean—he wanted me to do it because he thought I was good, but then he ripped me off. What do you mean—exploit me?" he asked suddenly. "What do you mean by that?"

"Trying to take advantage of your reputation around town," I suggested.

"Yeah, he was taking advantage of that." Larry changed his mind. "Oh, I didn't have that much of a reputation before I signed with Zappa." He changed his mind again. "Yeah, I guess I had a reputation." He laughed at himself. "But also Frank liked me, or he wouldn't have done it. He was nice to me. His wife said it was too bad that I had to do that for a living—singing for dimes and quarters. She said that it was too bad that people laughed at me. Frank said he thought I was a very good songwriter. That was good, because I didn't think I was a very good songwriter. He also thought I was a good singer."

I looked at Larry, noticing he was all limbs and feet and eyes. It was hard to keep his attention. Suddenly he pointed to his heart.

"Frank gave me a lot of confidence. I already had a lot of confidence, but I guess Frank put an extra confidence in me. After that, I thought I was going to be bigger than the Beatles. Really. I thought I was going to be the biggest act in the world after my album came out. In about three or four months, the Beatles would have to worry about me. Dylan would have to worry. I really thought I was good."

He seized my arm, and almost shouted. "I'm really good live. There's very few people that are as good as me live. I thought I'd just be the fucking biggest act in the world. From singing for dimes and quarters."

Larry looked at me. His face was bright and open. "Did you ever pay a dime or a quarter?"

"No," I confessed. I felt bad the moment I said it.

"I'm sure you paid a dime."

"Yeah, I think I did."

"I was worth it sometimes," Wild Man said. "There were a lot of people who liked it. I was trying to get on a label. It was hard getting on a label doing what I was doing."

"But I was really good," he cried faintly. "So I guess I'd have to thank Zappa for that. I mean—how many people would've recorded me? He wanted to call the album, God bless Wild Man Fischer. He was going along the Tiny Tim line. He wanted me to do a take-off on that. I said, fuck that trip, Frank. Yeah," Wild Man finally conceded, "he was exploiting

me."

"Were you unhappy after the album didn't make it?"

"Yeah, I was pretty unhappy." His heart leaped and then sank with a sense of what he had lost. He forced a smile, and said, "I blame it all on a lack of promotion. I could have been big." He coughed, and added impatiently. "But now it's 1971. I started out the new year with four concerts in Washington and Oregon and Idaho." He touched his boots and then his nose. "I went over tremendously in two of them. One concert I did in Moscow, people were cheering. They just wouldn't let me go."

I asked Wild Man if he ever saw Zappa any more. "Well, not too often. Fuck, he made promises to me. I'll make you a star. I'll make you a million. I won't burn you. He made it sound like he wasn't going to be like most of these other companies. A lot of them are trying to burn you. And he turns out to be just as bad as some of them." Larry did a perfect imitation of Zappa. "He says: I feel sorry for artists. I don't want to see artists back on the Strip singing for dimes and quarters." Larry shook his head. "He doesn't really believe that. He said I wasn't going to be singing on the street anymore. And that's how I wound up. I wanted to quit. I didn't like the music anymore."

"I don't blame you," I said. I meant it.

"But now I'd like to do all different kinds of concerts, anywhere I could work. All over the fucking world." Wild Man stood up and began jumping in the air. Quickly exhausted, he sat down again. "I would like to cause Wild Man Fischer mania—the dream I've always wanted. I figure I could cause it in the state of Oregon or Washington or Idaho. They knew my songs there. They knew 'Merry-Go-Round.' I'm so good live." Larry spoke in a loud clipped voice, purposely audible for the whole world. "I'm so good. I can make people laugh, right? Make people feel good. I mean—it's like a change because I'm so original. They come down and just laugh and laugh and laugh. That's the main thing of my trip."

An irresistible smile broke through and he laughed, saying, "I poke fun at rock 'n' roll a lot. That's my trip. I tell jokes a lot. Because of my originality and creativity, it's hard for me to get work. People figure I'm nuts. Wild Man sang to us for dimes and quarters, they say. Now he wants to sing in our nightclubs."

Larry looked out of the window, and said, "I don't write music. I just do it at random. I used to write down lyrics. I don't do that no more. I'm lazy. I never rehearse. I'll just do a show. I'm always ready. Any given minute. You can laugh all night. I don't think audience's have ever seen anything like me."

He grunted, then said something to himself. He gripped at his own reasoning, and continued, "I'm really a comedian. I'm not even a rock 'n' roll singer. I'm funnier than Bob Hope and I sing better than."

"Bob Hope," I suggested.

"Than Frank Sinatra," he said, correcting me. "You ever see me?" He ignored my affirmative response. "I don't think Warner Bros. had any faith in me. I was promoted wrong. I wasn't even promoted." He winked at me. "Was I?"

Larry walked to the door and then sat down again.

"I had made a name for myself at Sorrento Beach," he said meditatively. "After singing for all these years out here—and all the parties I sang at and stuff—and I was on Laugh-In once. You figure I did my own promotion." He surveyed the room and put on my coat. "Will you give me this?" I shook my head. Wild Man removed my coat and set it down. "Fuck, I don't care if Warners don't record me anymore, cause I'm going to be the biggest concert performer in the world."

He straightened his back and put his hand on the top of his head.

"I've had a lot of experience in the music business." He grinned. "A lot of experience getting burned. If you don't make the bucks, agents try to rip you off. And producers. And promoters. Everybody's trying to rip off everybody else and it sort of gets in the way of the music. It gets in the way of the fun."

Larry sneered, and got philosophical.

"It should be like everybody should get their fair share. Everybody should have a good time. I can remember when the Doors were fun to watch. And the Grateful Dead. Even Zappa used to be fun. Fuck, when I perform everybody has a good time. I think that probably everybody does. I'm the greatest performer in the world." He laughed like a little boy. "Jesus, I think I'm even better than Little Richard!"

"How do audiences react to you?"

"Sometimes they really get on me. They say, get off the stage, you fucking creep. Get off the stage, you creep. Get off the stage, booooo."

Larry grunted. It was a sad grunt.

"They start yelling at me. When audiences like me, it's usually half-and-half. The people up front, clapping. And all the drunkards in the back giving me a hard time." He grunted again. It was questioning this time.

"How would you like to be up there with only a guitar?" he demanded.

"Not very much," I admitted.

"Fuck, I don't even need a guitar, but it's hard to get hired without one. It looks right. The promoter up north gave me a guitar and a guitar strap that says, WILD MAN."

"Did Solomon Burke really give you that name?"

"Sure, but I think I'll change it."

"To what?"

"Wild Man stared right through me; his face was red. He drew a long breath and ignoring me, said, "One day, I think I'd like to challenge rock bands to have a Bum-of-the-Month club. Have rock bands fight each other." He laughed pleasantly. "For teenagers, rock is good. 'Light my fire,' and all that shit. And the Beatles. And I think everybody's gonna like me," he said, getting back to his one and only subject. "Young people are gonna like me. Old people. Not many young kids like me," he admitted. "They like good-looking groups with long hair. Manufactured groups like Three Dog Night."

"But they draw," he insisted. "I bet Three Dog Night would out-draw me."

There were no takers; Wild Man looked disappointed. "One of these days," he giggled. "One of these days, they're gonna go downhill and everybody's gonna pay to see me live, because they're gonna want to see something good. I'm gonna try to become popular without records. Hit it from another angle. Hit it on my own popularity. Have people come out and see me and decide. Instead of being such a hype. Just have them come and see me and say, well he is the greatest. They're gonna be talking for months after that Moscow concert."

He held up his hand and announced he was the greatest in Moscow. "Now I want to go away for a while," he told me. "Back to the Northwest. Stay away from California. I can't play California, because of those fucking hungry agents and the hungry promoters and the hungry other people. If they just didn't rip me off all the time, I'd do gigs. I am good. I know it's hard for some to believe it."

Larry believed it. "Wasn't I entertaining?" he asked. "You were." "Where did you see me?" "First, on the beach. Then, at the Shrine Auditorium."

"I'd like to make another record, if I could make it as good as my live act. Maybe I'll release it on my own label. Maybe with some amateur musicians. Fuck, I'll just do it myself. Musicians argue too much, they do all kinds of shit. I'd rather do it single. This time, with a guitar."

Larry jumped up again, looking like an impatient child. I couldn't keep him much longer. I tried to drag the afternoon together.

"After all you've been through, Wild Man, was it all worth it—the music and the performing?"

"I suppose, I wrote some good songs—not very good songs. Most of them are just about imaginary things." His lips were chapped, but he did his best to wet them. "But was it worth it? I wish I knew."

"Man, I used to be real good singing on the beach. Those days were really good. I was fucking singing on the beach. No one else was involved. I was feeling fucking out of sight. But my mother sort of fucked that whole trip up by putting me in a nut house. I was singing for free. Having a good time. You know, I was on the track team in high school," Larry admitted. "I ran the 440. And I was doing it good. I was going to go out for cross-country the next year, but the summer heat sort of got me—from the running, I guess. I kept running down to the beach. I was fast that summer. Remember how fast I was that summer? People would chase me and they couldn't catch me."

Wild Man made a funny face; it was indescribable. "I would say those were some of the better memories of my life. Before I started getting involved with the business end of it. But I had to do something for a living, so I figured I ought to do this—now that I'm getting older and everything."

Larry isn't exactly a victim of the system, I remember thinking. Not a victim of the record industry. Or of Hollywood. Maybe it's just his dreams. I don't know exactly what makes me so fucking angry. About this place I live in. Anyway I asked him what's next for him, where do you go after the beach is gone and you're still Wild Man Fischer.

"I'll probably last forever. See, I'm not limited. You'll be buying my albums when you get those space cassettes. I'll be the one that's ahead, not Three Dog Night. It'll be Wild Man Fischer. You'll see. Fuck, I'm not a rock 'n' roll singer. Sometimes I sing rock 'n' roll melodies. You noticed that? I got blues songs too. Folk songs, jazz songs, calypso, country 'n' western songs. You name 'em; I got 'em."

He felt his hair. "Did you hear my album?" I nodded. "Did you like it? Wouldn't you agree that I am better alive?"

"What sort of person are you, Larry?" I asked him. I had all sorts of unresolved feelings about him.

His answer was delayed. When it came, it was in spurts.

"I'd say I'm a relaxed sort of person. I would say I'm a normal person. It's just our society under capitalism says you cannot do that shit all the time. And I do it all the time." He grunted again. This time, it was nearly a sigh. "Most of the time anyway. Not all the time since I'm getting older and you can't do it all the time."

"Are you happy?"

"I'm not unhappy. Wouldn't you be happy, if you were doing more work. Admit it." Yes, Larry. "Wouldn't you be happy if you'd just done four gigs with people laughing. Staying on farms. Farms. Wouldn't you like that?" Yes, Wild Man. I was thinking of all the lost kids who had come to the Strip in search of a dream. All the innocent children, now growing old. "Tell me you wouldn't like that. You'd think about going back, wouldn't you?" Yes. "So I'm going back."

"When?"

"I don't know"

by Michael Ross CREEM

Atlantic storm rolling in on 3 fronts

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The J. Geils Band
J. Geils Band

2400 106
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Jesse Davis
Featuring Eric Clapton,
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Monday 10th May... a normal day at Zigzag - a bit of letter answering, the Byrds new single booming around the room, the dog chewing up a telephone directory, coffee bubbling.

The phone rings. "It's Snoopy from Love" says Carole, "he wants to talk to Mac".

EEK! I splutter coffee over my jeans as I rise involuntarily from my chair - "I bet he does", I think, as my face goes through about 6 colour changes and my hair starts falling out at twice its normal rate. (Over a year ago in ZZ 10, we did this Love article in the course of which an "unconventional relationship" between drummer Snoopy and another member of the band was mentioned - it was just an uncorroborated story that Mac had heard, and we were stupid enough to print it. We've been fearing reprisals for that article ever since).

"Hello, this is Pete... I'm afraid Mac's not here right now". (He was in France at the time).

"Yeah? Well this is Snoopy... seems you guys need to know a few facts". His accent was heavy/Yank (whatever that is) and he sounded as if his mouth had a pound of Wrigley's in it; he sure sounded menacing, but I couldn't be sure whether he was steaming with anger or not - he had seen the article, obviously, and he was a little distraught about, shall we say, a few inaccuracies.

Still unsure of his attitude, I fixed up for John and me to go down to Richmond (where he was living) to have a chat and put the record straight. Snoopy always looked a bit undernourished in those old photographs of Love, so I figured that if he got too stropky, we'd beat the shit out of him (as a token of our peace-&-love-to-all-men code). So off we went, hoping to learn a few things about the early days of Love, who's Elektra albums are among our favourites - he'd already been interviewed in Sounds and Melody Maker, but each article had hinted at things rather than explore details. Just in case, I put 3 extra cassettes in my pocket... "You never know!" I thought, "he may have a few stories to tell".

Well, we came out of his flat at 1.15 am, with over 4 hours of recorded chat - and it was ALL great stuff (if you love Love, that is). We walked over to the van grinning like the cheshire cats who ate the cream, unable to talk. We just couldn't believe it; it was probably the best, and certainly the most interesting, interviews we'd ever done. Not only was he one of the most articulate, charming cats I've ever pointed a microphone at, but he had been bottling up all this stuff for 4 years, and when he found that we gloated and doted on every scrap of information we could find about Love, he just poured it all out - every detail he could remember. And those details would make your hair curl, believe me.

Well we'd literally fill up half the magazine if we printed the whole lot, and we're not about to edit it down to 2 pages, so what we're going to do is print a Love supplement - not for news stand sale, but obtainable directly from us (full details in our next issue).

Meanwhile, this month we'll tell you all about Snoopy since his departure from Love in early 1967. Now, if you're familiar with the sleeves of the first two Love albums, you'll know that Alban 'Snoopy' Pfisterer is the sort of odd man out, with his centre parted short hair, short sleeved shirt, and expression of bland innocence. Well, there were good reasons for all of that, but the Snoopy of today - 5 years later - has long hair,



ALBAN PFISTERER IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN OSAKA, JAPAN

a moustache, a shirt given to him by a guy who shared a Mexican jail cell with him, and he's seen enough depravity, perversion and sin (wahoo!) to wipe any traces of innocence off his face. So he sits there, rolling and smoking cigarettes of herbal tobacco (really - 'Heath and Heather Sweet Herbal Mixture!'), dead pleased that we consider him, a relatively obscure drummer who just happened to play with Love for a little over a year, to be more of a superstar than Elvis.

(Note: We've got a new printer who we don't want to lose. He's a bit sensitive about the more colourful words and imagery used by some of rock's more spirited spokesmen, and so rather than offend him, and to retain the original flavour of Snoopy's lyricism, we've resorted to a wee spot of censorship.)

"Fxxx me, man, it's a fxxxing long story, but if you cats have got the time, I'll go through the whole fxxxing lot with you".

Alright; so Snoopy's been in England now for three months - he originally came over to try and find a fresh start (though it turned out to be a false start) in music because in Los Angeles, where he's lived on and off for the last seven years, he can't shake off his musical history, and Love is held in nowhere near as high esteem as over here. His intentions, basically, were divided; "one scene was to get a group together to play the stuff I've been writing, which is sort of Bryan Maclean type melodic/pretty, you know, and the other scene was to try and find a group who needed a drummer". So what happened? Well, most of the people he ran into were "full of shxt" or unsuitable in some less painful capacity.

He was assured that he would find a perfect niche in the new band being put together by John Morshead and Alex Dmchowski and, having been impressed by their work with Aynsley Dunbar, he gave it a whirl. "I went down there and we played and jammed for a while, but fxxx-

ing Morshead couldn't get off the ground, man, and Alex freaked out, and it ended up with both of them walking around with their tails between their arses - it was incredible. It was completely untogther, they don't know where the fxxx they're going, and they don't know what they're doing. I was pretty much brought down because some of their playing on that old Dunbar album is very tasteful shxt, man. That was the gig that had the heaviest promise, but it came to nothing".

Then Jellybread called him up and asked him to come down and jam. "Well, by this time I'd been through several of these jamming scenes, so I explained to the cat that we could handle a certain amount of shxt over the phone, and asked him to drop by with their album - but he didn't show, so that was the end of that one".

"Then there was a cat who said he used to be Jeff Beck's singer, and a few other cats too, all of which came to nothing. I got a free weekend in Holland with Arrival, but they were on a hit parade trip, and I also got calls from Blue Horizon and Mickie Most's office - and none of them, man, came to anything".

"The thing that's happening now is with a group called Dada; I like some of the stuff they've got together, there'll be an album, I won't be tied up at all, there'll be bread involved, I get on well with Steve York, the bass player, and so I'm going to do it between now and the beginning of June, when I'm splitting for Japan".

The album, according to Snoopy, will be produced for Island by Chris Blackwell, and is a "completely different trip from the old Dada - more funky... sort of up the middle between the Stones and the Band".

The temporary nature of these arrangements is due to Snoopy's indecision, the failure of his musical ideas to solidify in his head, and his disenchantment with Britain. "If I had my scene

together, I would stay around, because I think there are a lot of good musicians out of work here - at least for sessions. But I don't have my material together enough, so I'm just going off to Japan - I've got a brother there who I haven't seen for about 8 years, and he's into the same sort of things as me... spiritual development, yoga, macrobiotics and square things like that". He explodes into a laugh, which roars down his nose and sets off a splurge of violent coughing. Just as it seems he has choked to death, he recovers completely and goes wheeling off into dreams about the joyous prospect of a vast Pfisterer family reunion, also involving his mother and 3 brothers.

"Are you going back to LA after that?"

"No man, I'm never going back to LA". (Which is just as well - he won't be able to go back to LA after we've done his Love memoirs).

"Listen, I guess I misled you a bit... I didn't come over here just for the music... I wanted to see Europe. I was dreaming a little bit - for some reason or another I thought it would be different, another world, a whole different trip, and blah blah blah. You know, man. Well, Europe, man, is so much like the United States that it's fxxking pathetic - this may as well be Los Angeles, and that's why I'm splitting. I should have known better than to come to another Western dominated civilisation - I'm interested in a whole new culture, man... maybe Indonesia or India, but not this fxxking worn out, Americanised, materialistic scene, which makes everyone's life the same".

End of fierce diatribe about our decadent country. "If the music scene was taken out and put in a different environment, I'd have stuck around, but England has been too much of a disappointment, man".

Well, fxxx off home then!

"The music scene in London is no different from Los Angeles, man, so fxxx it".

He remains adamant about Britain's shortcomings despite our staunch national pride defence. "It's different in Manchester" says John, "they've got Stackwaddy up there for a start". It's no use - Snoopy is totally unimpressed and wanders off in dreams about the orient.

His mind is made up - he's going to Osaka - as if he'll find it any less Americanised there.

Alright, that's the present out of the way. Now, what about the interim period between Love and now? "Well, you see, actually man, in the first place I didn't ever intend to be a professional musician - I couldn't play the drums worth a fxxx when I joined Love, and I was even worse when I left... I mean, I got through that time with those fxxing heavies - they were so fxxking heavy with all their heavies, that I got heavied out, man, and instead of improving over the two years, I regressed... I mean, there were some really very heavy scenes went down there, man - but I'll talk about that later. What I'm really trying to say is that when I left Love, I couldn't play the drums, and yet I was in a position where I had a lot of contacts and I grooved on the idea of making money drumming rather than going back to school and becoming a commercial artist. So I decided to learn how to play my drums properly, and carry on. So, for the next few years I got a lot of offers which I couldn't handle... a lot of offers, man. They'd say 'Are you the guy who played harpsichord on Da Capo?' - and I'd say 'Yeah, I'm the cat'... but I couldn't take the work because I couldn't improvise,

man. I couldn't even play a 3 chord progression, because I didn't know what it was - everything that I ever played with Love was either written down, because I'd had 8 years of classical training and could read music OK, or it was explained exactly to me by Arthur - and that went for both keyboards and drums. So I just wasn't any good for any of these cats who phoned - their scene was just the fxxking opposite... all they could do was jam out - none of them could read a fxxking note, so that was no good."

"Then these cats would phone and ask me to play drums with them because they knew I was on 'Little Red Book', '7 and 7 is' and 'Hey Joe' - but when they asked me to play 'Louie Louie', I couldn't - I really couldn't, man, I was so fxxking bad. So I realised it was time to get myself together, and I joined this half-ass bunch of drop-outs who were into a technical trip... they knew all kinds of shxt and taught me how to play everything - they taught me how to play a shuffle..."

A shovel?

"No, man, a fxxxing shuffle - I couldn't even play a shuffle beat - then I got to do a little 3/4, a little Bossa nova, a little waltz, and I really started scoping out and getting some co-ordination. From then on I just played clubs every night, 5 hours a night!"

He played in several different groups because of his 'personality hang up, man... I have problems getting along with people'.

We started packing up our stuff...

"No, man, I didn't mean you - I meant that I can't help telling people where they're at - and a lot of people can't handle the truth. But it was good, because I got lots of experience and that's how I wanted it - not only that, but it was better bread all the time. I was making 225 dollars a week with The Cat, my last group... and that takes us up to 1 1/2 years ago, when I got tired of playing 5 hours a night, 7 nights a week, the same fxxking top 40 shxt - it gets to be a drag, you know... fxxking dinner music".

He went to Mexico to see his mum, who had moved down there. That was at Christmas 1969. So he stayed at his good mother's house and played with this Mexican group. "They were definitely fxxking blues fanatics, man - English stuff like Mayall and Beck - and I was into American blues - the roots behind BB King and that sort of thing".

Well, to cut a long story short (and we've got to cut a lot out because Snoopy tends to get sidetracked into the most obscure, bizarre stories), he ended up in prison because his van had caused some technical infringement of vehicle excising regulations or something, and he was deported. Undeterred, he went back in illegally "to straighten out some shxt I wanted to get sorted out" and started up another group, but he "got caught smoking dope" and was deported again. So he went south to Costa Rica, where he was brought up for the first 10 years of his life (because his old man worked there as an architect for the American Foreign Service). He didn't like it (would he be satisfied anywhere on this globe?) and moved on to Panama. His intention was to work on a boat bound for either Japan or Europe, whichever was leaving first, but "some cat stole all my shxt and I got discouraged".

"I ended up buying the cheapest ticket to wherever the first boat out of the harbour was going... as it turned out, it was headed for Barcelona, so that's where I went". From there, he made his way to England via aunts in Switzerland and a brother in Germany.

"Everybody told me that if I wanted to get into the music scene in England, I should look in the Melody Maker ads - so that's what I did. I mean, I don't like throwing my name around... at least I didn't until I found what it does to people over here. Like there was one ad which said 'bassplayer wants other musicians to form an early Love type group' - so I thought 'I'll call the cat and put him on a trip'... and it did put him on a trip, man, he couldn't fxxking believe it. He was a nice cat, but that's it - I couldn't take his group seriously. Another of the things I did as a result of the MM was to go for an audition with T Rex. I'd never heard of them before - for what that's worth... do you want to hear this, man?"

Sure.

"Well, this cat Marc Bolan and a bassplayer and a conga drummer were there, and there was a line of about 15 drummers, man. I was about the third one, and by the time it got to be my chance, Marc Bolan had wandered off somewhere. But anyway, the bassplayer said 'I'm just going to play a run and I want you to play along'; so he does some real fxxking lickety split bassplaying, the conga man does some lickety-split banging, and I get into some real lickety split drumming. This went on for about 3 minutes, then the guy says to me 'OK, that's cool'. So I said 'That's cool!' And he says 'Yeah - that's it!'. 'That's it? From that you know how well I can play drums?' And he said 'Yeah - that's it man!'. Well, I admit that I ended up overplaying but these cats were overplaying too, and it was all I could do. So I said 'How do you figure that you know how good I am after only 3 minutes?' And he said 'Oh, it's the vibes, man! 'The vibes?' That was enough to make me walk out anyway, but after I'd pressured him into agreeing that the way he was running the audition was no way to find out how good a drummer was, he told me that what they were looking for was just a straight forward Ringo type drummer. So I told him that I considered myself capable of playing exactly like that, but whenever I did in the past, people said things like 'Hey man, why don't you drop some shxt in there?' But they wouldn't do it again, playing something simple - all he would say is 'No man, it's just the vibes'. So in the end I said 'Alright... later, man' and split. But it was hush as well, because I heard some of their records later and it may be alright for Marc Bolan, but that shxt ain't for me".

"Well, I ran through some more of these auditions and, well, I just didn't believe it. I went to one and these cats said 'OK, just jam along!... and they were so fxxking untogether man, that I couldn't believe that anybody could have the nerve to even ask someone down to audition. They had absolutely nothing - but the manager said 'Well, what do you think, man?' all enthusiastically. 'What do I think?' I said, '... after that half-assed jam up?... what am I supposed to think?' So, after a few of those, I realised I wasn't going to get anywhere like that, and I phoned up Sounds and MM to get stuff written about me so that the people would come to me instead of the other way round. That's how I met up with all the cats I talked about to begin with".

"So that's how all those scenes went down, man, and now I'm about ready to leave".

And now he has left, but I hope he comes back "when he gets his shxt together", because he's a real character, sure enough. Pete

PS: Watch for our special Love issue - coming soon, folks!



MELANIE: A MOST INTERESTING BIRD

Ever since 1963 I've been continually surprised that anybody could reach stardom with no more than a lot of hope, a voice and an acoustic guitar. But so many people have made it since then - Donovan, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, Tom Paxton and, now, Melanie. 1963 is the operative date, when Dylan was at the height of his raucous grunting, accompanied only by his acoustic guitar and the occasional blast on his harp. I always thought nobody could stand alone on a stage after that and seem novel. In 1963 Melanie was about 16 and has grown up to her present 24 years in the shadow of Dylan and his followers. She has collected a lot from their influence and has added much that is her own - her humour, her unmistakeable voice and her clear expression of her own ideas.

Melanie was born in New York and bred there. Her musical direction was established when she was still at school and swamped most other, more academic pursuits. After school she did two years in the American Academy of Dramatic Art. She had no pretensions of becoming a Broadway theatrical star, but her time

there was not wasted. If her teachers' aim was to teach her to communicate, then they have succeeded.

After drama school she worked for two months acting in plays for children, this being followed by six months wandering around New York playing and singing in bars - a formative period that seems to be in the background of most folk oriented singers in America, the New York wandering, getting things into - or out of - perspective in the big city, a period of directionlessness leading in the end to a direction. (It's an essential qualification, this wandering - preferably penniless - and no ordinary press officer will put out any potted biography without it).

The six months ended with Melanie getting an audition for the part of Barbara Allen in a New York play called 'Dark of the moon' (which she'd never heard of). She went into the wrong office by mistake and found herself in the premises of a music publisher where she met independent producer Peter Schekeryk and was asked to sing. (!). Pow! First step on the ladder

to fame. It is at this stage of her development that she, as most artistes are, was faced with the reality of putting her best material into the 35 minutes or so of an LP. Some put everything they have into the first LP and never manage quite to repeat the standard in subsequent releases (eg the first LPs of the Doors, Leonard Cohen, Bert Jansch, Tom Paxton and various others). Others produce a bummer, for one reason and another, which they have to live down before they can show their true abilities on a second album (eg James Taylor, Donovan, Big Brother, etc). Still others make a good first LP which serves as a starting point for future improvements. Melanie did this with her first LP 'Born to be' (and so did Mott the Hoople with their first, which I mention at this point because their latest includes an excellent version of Melanie's 'Lay Down'). Most of the songs are her own, but she includes 'Mr Tambourine Man' as a sort of safety device, an indicator to show her prospective audience her position in the performers' spectrum that ranges from, say, Dean Martin at one extreme to perhaps the Dead at the other. The inclusion

of a Dylan song indicates that her sympathies lie nearer to the live sounds of the Dead than to the dead sounds of Dean Martin. The other non-Melanie composition on that album is AAMIle's 'Christopher Robin' set to a Melanie tune - which adds a slight Guthrie/Paxton flavour. But the feel of her album and her publicity showed a tendency for her to be after a slightly wider and therefore showbizzier audience than the hard core folkies of, say, Janis Ian's.

All Melanie's records have been produced competently by Peter Schekeryk, the man she bumped into by mistake and who is now her husband. LP number two, 'Affectionately Melanie', caused no great stir - nor did her first - but by now she was making public appearances and being well received and a lot of people bought her albums retrospectively after the success of 'Candles in the rain'. There are conflicting reports about 'Candles' with the Edwin Hawkins Singers backing. Melanie told Music Now that it was a great experience working with them, but she told Isobel Stevenson of Crawdaddy that 'the Hawkins Singers got the impression that I was backing them. In other words, they wanted the record to be The Edwin Hawkins Singers and Melanie, not Melanie and the Hawkins Singers'.

I was first drawn to Melanie by her version of 'Ruby Tuesday' and the quotability of the songs on her 'Candles' album (see the 1 of W Festival report last year) - especially 'Close to it all', which states what has so often been shouted, that you should free your own mind from unnecessary barriers in order to do the same for society in general. It's a pretentious sentiment when expressed like that, but in the song it is well put and doesn't sound like a quote from a revolutionary poster put out at 75p by a non-revolutionary money-spinning concern. It just sounds nice as put by Melanie. If I had been a bit more awake a couple of years ago, I could have heard the same song on the first LP. Strangely, 'Close to it all' appears on LPs number 1, 2 and 4 and was Melanie's final encore at her recent Royal Festival Hall concert, so she evidently still likes it just as much now as then.

At the Festival Hall, Melanie put her song into effect and brought the people close to it all (as she did at her Carnegie Hall concert, too). She invited all the people who were seated around her to surround her on the stage, and others, on their own initiative, came down from the gods and sat in the aisles. However, fire escape and first aid access rules are strictly enforced in the Hall and after a dozen or so songs, everyone was politely asked to return to his seat. Official resistance to informal seating arrangements may have been the cause of Melanie's reported tantrum before the concert which caused a twenty minute delay in starting and contributed a little more to the reputation she has in some quarters - of being a little girl with a big ego. I don't mean this as a criticism - you need a big ego to sit alone in front of a big audience and sing your heart out, which Melanie does admirably. (I'm sure she'd disapprove of my use of the word 'ego' in this context if her song 'Psychotherapy' is anything to go by; it's an excellent send-up (to the tune of 'John Brown's Body') of Freud's theories and the vulgarised terminology which has spread with the wider acceptance and exaggeration of those already exaggerated theories).

I said before, that Melanie is very quotable. She also seems to be very honest, truthful

with herself and most of the time unpretentious. Her quotability consists largely of her knack of saying very concisely, something which we've all thought of vaguely but have never bothered to focus accurately. Here are some (I hope) apposite quotes which illustrate this ability:

On the clash between personal aims and commercial interests:
"They say get out and sell them, but selling's not my aim;
I'll sing the life I'm living and try to ease the pain of all the ones around me no matter who they are;
They stand behind the curtain and hope I'll be a star".

On vegetarianism:
"I don't eat animals and they don't eat me".

On being jilted:
"I should have knocked when I opened the door;
Pardon me, miss, but he's a friend from before, who never locked his door....
I opened without knocking - like before".

On the Christian view of virginity:
"And I thought I loved Harold and I really loved John;
I really loved Alfie and I almost loved Tom,
I loved them so easy and I loved them so free,
so I don't think that heaven will want to love me".

On the fragility of young ideals:
"They ran to the festival to show they were one;
they've fallen in love with all human kind.
So tell them you love them, so they won't change their minds".

On exploitation and token do-gooding:
"They're only putting in a little to get rid of a lot that's wrong;
they're only putting in a nickel to win a dollar song".

Melanie deals with lots of topics and themes. Another knack of hers is to sing without sounding corny, about love and peace - which is getting daily more difficult with the amount of songs put out on those subjects, mostly of low quality. The list of Melanie quotes doesn't end there, you can add to it.

Besides being quotable herself, Melanie's press reviews are also highly quotable and varied. How exact they are is debateable, but here are a few:

"Melanie is everything, as a performer and songwriter, that Laura Nyro is supposed to be and isn't". . . San Francisco Chronicle.

"She has a peculiar voice which is a mixture of street wail and Edith Piaf laser beam". . . Ralph J Gleason.

"Melanie, a voice which hovers between Piaf and Streisand". . . Sunday Times.
"The anti-star. Total spontaneity. Beautiful voice that turns throaty and exasperated to sing a kind of passionate folksong". . . Le Figaro.

And finally, from me here and now. "Melanie, a most interesting bird" Ian

Albums: (All on Buddah Records)	
'Born To Be'	203 019
'Affectionately Melanie'	203 028
'Candles in the rain'	2318 009
'Leftover Wine'	2318 011
'Good Book'	2322 001

Ron Cornelius is one of those 'overnight fame' artistes. His San Franciscan band of a few years ago fell flat on its face outside a small circle of friends (and their two albums weren't even released here), but as a result of a few studio sessions, his name has become, well, not exactly a household word, but at least its mention rings a bell. Propelled by Cohen, boosted by Dylan, Ron Cornelius now feels ready for a solo album, which is why he was in London recently.

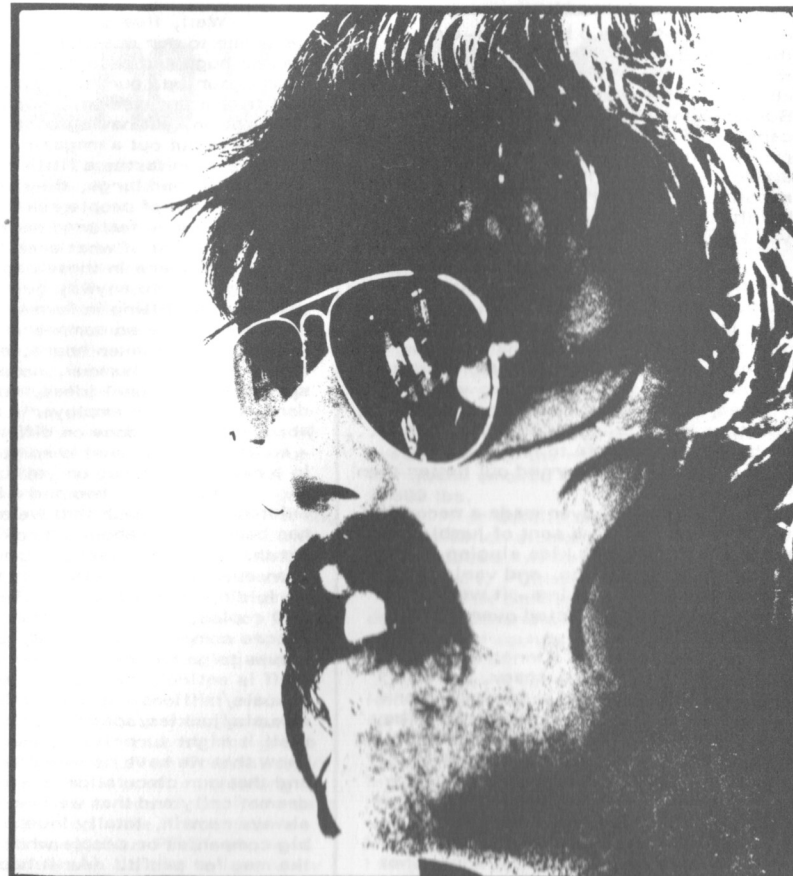
Having recorded the tracks in Nashville, he was over to do a bit of mixing and to add a few final touches - using Trident studios to get a sound comparison. With him were the two members of his band. . . Joe Davis, who also played bass with him in West (his old group) and drummer Paul Distill. "I was in a band with Paul in the Bay area for a year and a half, way back, when I was about 16 or 17. . . long before the Charlatans or any of the other groups which subsequently made San Francisco's name. We were like a house band for KYA radio stations and used to back all the big names when they came in - The Miracles, Bobby Freeman, Chubby Checker, all that kind of thing. Anyway, when I got the chance to do my own album, theirs were the first two numbers that I dialled".

The album is made up of songs he has put by over the years - for just such a chance. Some are pretty old, and some are new; "I don't claim to be a songwriter who could rush out a song every 15 minutes, but at the same time, I couldn't expect West to do every song I wrote, nor did I want them to - some meant more to me than seeing the other guys putting them together in a different way than I'd intended. So, for some reason or another, I clung on to them - so they're all new, in so much as they haven't been recorded before. . . and that goes for the two which I didn't write, one of which is a Clyde Otis/Joey Byers song and the other a pre-weird, as you might say, Dr John. This album though, is just me. . . the reason those other two songs are on it is because I identified real close with them".

"When I was ready to do the album, I was sure that Joe would be there, but I really felt lucky when Paul said he wasn't into anything and wanted to do it, because he is a tremendous drummer. . . I've played with a lot of good drummers, but he, to me, is the best, to say the least. There's just us three on it - I did a few piano and guitar overdubs, but a four piece sound is as big as we get. If we ever got a chance to play the songs publicly though, I'd want a piano player with us - I haven't learnt how to play guitar and piano simultaneously yet. As far as influences go, I've been influenced by every single day I've spent in music. . . of course in the last few years Cohen and Dylan, but I've picked up a lot of things, put down a lot of things, and went round scratching my head a lot too".

His memories of West are not exactly over-enthusiastic; he was dissatisfied with the way they were handled, the way they were promoted, and their lack of success. A San Francisco band, they went to Nashville to record - not to use all the Kenny Buttrees and Pete Drakes, because they did all their own playing and singing - but because they thought they were working with a "higher quality bunch of people" than those they'd left behind on the coast. "I don't think there is anybody, as far as production and engineering goes, that I'd even mention in the same room as Neil Wilburn, Rgy Halee or Tom Dowd. I mean, Neil is a beautiful person and he really does know his shit when it comes down to

RON CORNELIUS



recording. We were always happy with the way the records were made, at least".

"Columbia didn't even know what they had. . . I looked in the catalogue and they had us listed as a damned country and western group, and they were promoting us in that field. No wonder we didn't sell too many. But I don't know. . . I just don't have anything good to say about them. . . I just take the money, cash the cheques and go to the stores".

San Francisco is still his home but, as he says, "music is my life and you just can't stay in one spot - but I never did get too wrapped up in the San Francisco scene. We played a lot of the same places as the

Dead, Quicksilver and what have you, but they prefer to hang together - there's strength in numbers. I was there at the time of the acid thing, but I was observing rather than getting too involved with any one bunch of people. . . as to say that I was ever a part of the magic mountain thing that was going on there, I don't claim it. After the first year, it lost its impetus and now it's little different from anywhere else".

When West broke up, he "hit the studios" and did some albums with Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt, though unless you were familiar with his style he doubted if you would notice his presence after they'd



mixed them. "The reason I laid those names on you is, like, you get out an encyclopaedia and look up 5 string banjo and there's Earl Scruggs' name. . . they've been recording for 40 years, so when I had a chance to do them, I showed up". He wasn't looking for another gig particularly, being more interested in getting cracking with his solo album, but then he was offered the Cohen job and "well, I signed on as a private in Leonard Cohen's Army, you might say. I'd met Leonard in Nashville about three years ago when I was recording with West, and he was down there doing his things; I ended up going to a session or two of his, and then when it came the time that he wanted to go on the road and play for people, Bob Johnston suggested me and Leonard remembered. . . we hit it off pretty good together. I was interested in his lifestyle and the way he was expressing it".

As part of the Army, he played his guitar behind Leonard Cohen for about a year and a half, but "right now, it's a time to relax and grow. . . the album's out and so we're taking a bit of time out. We did five tours last year, and I think everybody deserves a rest - especially the girls. Well, actually they were crusades rather than tours - Leonard has a lot of things to say that just can't be sung. I really got involved in a lot of his ways of thinking - he's not a bull-shit person, he's for real - and he turned my head round quite a bit. . . it was much more than just a musical trip. I'm not saying that I went through any great changes, but I got a lot more out of me during the tours by being so closely related to Leonard; I got much more out of it than just the music and the bread".

"But, as I say, the album's out now - after 10 months of working on it - and Leonard has gone away to do some writing. . . or at least that's what he planned to do, so what better time to cut my own album?"

What about the skimpy little booklet that comes with 'Songs of love and hate'? "Well it was designed to be much better - on much better paper, with a little red tassel on it - it was a fantastic idea until we saw the way it had come out. I don't know what Leonard thought, but I thought that little booklet was like a hot-dog menu, where they just put together what they're going to have every thursday, staple it and fold it. It was intended to be a beautiful, neat, classy little booklet, but it came out like. . . oh. . . oh. . ."

In the interim, he'd worked with Dylan. He was on two tracks on 'Self Portrait' - 'Belle Isle' and 'Woogie Boogie' - and on most of 'New Morning'. We got the sleeve of 'New Morning' out and he started talking. "Let me see that. . . I don't know what Buzzy Feiten played because it was overdubbed - he wasn't on the sessions with us. David Bromberg didn't play any electric guitar, and I don't think Al Kooper did either. . . I don't really understand a lot of this bullshit. I didn't play on every cut, but I was on all but a couple. Let me see, there was something else on here that really cracked me up - oh yeah, it's got Dylan down as playing electric guitar and organ, but he certainly didn't at the sessions I was at. Yeah, that was a good time - I really enjoyed making that album".

His solo album will be released by Polydor in the next couple of months or so. "I'm not the kind of guy who'll say he'll jump off a bridge if the album isn't a hit, but if these songs are unacceptable to the people or don't have what it takes to get an album off, then I'm wrong. . . and I can always sit down somewhere and play guitar, right?" Right. Mac

LOL'S ALBUM

Clive Selwood, who looks after Dandelion Records with John Peel, phoned up the other day and wondered if we'd be interested in offering Lol Coxhill's new double album to Zigzag readers at an advantageous price. Sure, I said, that sounds like a nice idea - so if any of you good people out there in Zigzagland want to receive this magnificent album, beautifully gift wrapped in brown cardboard, by return of post (honest), then all you have to do is send us the exorbitantly small amount of only £1.65. Yes, folks, that's right ... only 33 bob for a double album - unbelievable, but true.

Mind you, there were certain factors involved, not the least of which being the Kinney Record Group's quandary as to how they were going to sell it. Not only were their salesmen scared stiff of trying to unload it on suburban record shop managers ("What the bloody hell are you trying to sell me now... get out of here!"), but the executives of the company, unable to tolerate a complete listening of the album, feared the most terrible criticism ("It made me throw up after only 20 minutes" - Barnsley Argus. "Lol Coxhill blows, but his record sucks" - Financial Times. etc.). So, in an effort to shift at least 3 copies, this amazing offer was made to us.

Right, now if you read our Lol thing in ZZ 13 or saw him blowing with Kevin Ayers, you'll know that he's an ace cat extraordinaire, and not at all like the overfed Mahatma Ghandi of the drawings on the sleeve. (By the way, that is not

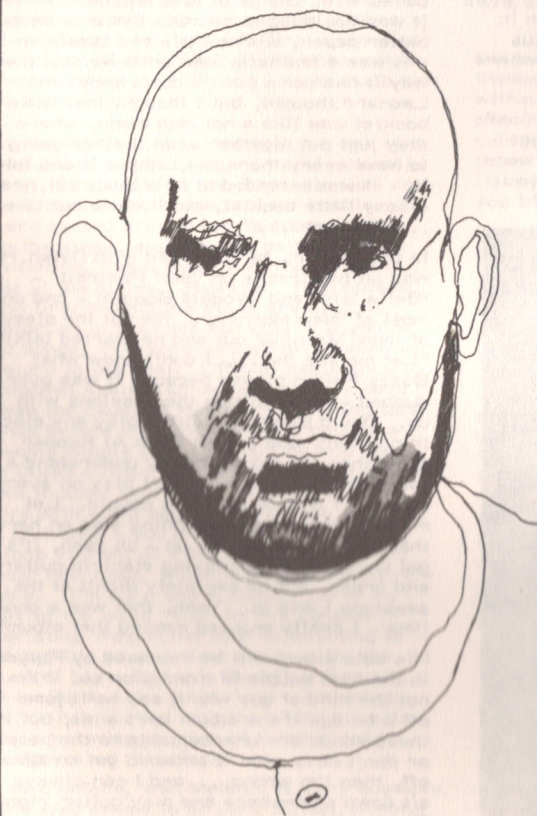
a trendy 1969-type 3 button tie-dye vest thing that he's wearing in those sleeve drawings - it's a real vest which he purchased from Aylesbury market in 1947). But on to the record; well, it defies a capsulated description, but one could compare it to a diary or a photograph album I suppose... fragments, memories, recollections of certain times, and so on, but the best thing to do is get Lol to tell you about it.

"Well, John Peel asked me to do it in the first place because he particularly liked the stuff he'd heard me playing when I was busking around London, and he gave me a free hand to record what I wanted and call him when I needed him. So I did it - and then told him I needed him, when it was finished; but he seems very happy about it, though he had nothing to do with it really... he thought it was safe to leave it in my hands, and says it's turned out better than he expected."

"I knew if I ever made a record that I'd want it to be a sort of jumble - so that's why it includes kids singing, David Bedford and me singing, and various other things besides my playing - it was bits of recordings that I collected over a few months really."

"The people at Kinney used to regard me as a dangerous crank, but now I think they regard me as a friendly crank... but they still think I'm a crank. They think the record's weird and don't know how to sell it, because they don't know what it is - they're not even sure which market to push it on. I know it's all sort of jumbled up, but I'd at least like it to be available to people who might be interested, or like me, or at least know what to expect when they play it."

So remember, good readers, if you want to be the proud owner of Lol's epic album, just send us £1.65 (which includes post and packing) and we'll shove it off to you immediately. Pete



A sample packet of a dozen UPS papers is available for \$5. A Library Subscription to all UPS papers (over 200) costs \$50 for six months or \$100 for one year. Both items must be paid for in advance. Order by sending your request and check to UPS, Box 28, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Well, I've got to admit that the response to our questionnaire last month was so huge and encouraging that it put new vigour into our flagging enthusiasm. It'll take a few weeks to work out all the information, but having done so we should be able to put out a magazine which reflects your tastes a little more than ours - though by and large, they seem to coincide. A lot of people asked for articles on people we've featured recently, so we've put a list of what each issue contains, elsewhere in these pages. Thanks for all your help anyway... It seems that you like filling in forms, because some were done so comprehensively that they must have taken hours, some were tinged with wild humour, some suggested somewhat irrational ideas, some were done during their employer's time, and about 60% were done on different paper - so some of you must keep your issues in a neat pile. Good on ya!

During our two and a bit years of existence, a rumour that we are folding has been spread about approximately every month. In recent weeks, rumours have been even more abundant - not only are we folding, but our circulation has dropped to 9 copies, we've been taken over by a record company, we've only got 3 more issues to go before we close down, the staff is entirely made up of perverts/homosexuals/millionaires/alcoholics/heterosexuals/junkies/spades/etc ad nauseam. Well it might surprise rumour mongers to know that we have no intention of folding and that our circulation is still rising dramatically and that we are, and will always remain, totally independent of any big companies or people who want to use the mag for profit. (As it happens we've formed our own publishing company, and that now owns Zigzag). If anyone else spreads any more shit about us (and we know who some of the people concerned are) they'll find Ginger standing on their doorstep one of these days. So watch out. On to more pleasant topics, like

the

BYRDS

for instance. Press Officer of the month award goes to Mike at CBS (and his pair of lovely ladies), who bent over backwards (an interesting spectacle) to furnish us with vast amounts of time to interview the Byrds. As a result, we're halfway through a special edition on the Byrds - a very full and comprehensive document, we hope - which should be ready next month. Full details in the next issue.

We're also doing a special edition on

LOVE

since Snoopy so kindly poured out the whole story for us. Not only was he there at the very beginning, but he has remained a close friend of Arthur Lee, and was able to tell us all about Love's trials and tribulations after he was slung out. The only trouble is that it's nearly all highly libelous, so we may have to print it as a novel and supply the key separately. We don't know yet - but more details in the next Zigzag.

Amazing news for Beefheartians around the globe - A&M are putting out that 4 track EP. So for Christ's sake buy it and thrust it into the charts - we'll

ZIGZAG WANDERINGS

get Beefheart on Top Of The Pops yet! Which reminds me - I saw a picture of Beefheart on stage with his band at a recent concert, and there were 4 vacuum cleaners coiled around the amps and speakers... very weird.

Talking of Top of the Pops - how wondrous to see Medicine Head! What a fine band... went to see them the other day and was amazed to see that their old biscuit tin sized amp has been replaced by a vast array of shiny gear. Not only that, but they've got a dog called Dog.

Due to the increase in the cost of baked beans and bread, we've had to put the price up by 3p... sorry about that.

Good records around include grist by Beefheart, Eddie Cochran, Mike Heron, Mountain, Floyd, Mr Fox, Gypsy, and two that I must mention (or I'll get my head smashed in) are Edgar Broughton Band and Roy Harper. At this point, I must re-emphasise that it isn't our policy to review records because everyone else does... but we're always thinking about starting to.

Another nice record that probably won't sell more than about 8 copies because no-one has been told that the group is good, is Unicorn's LP on Transatlantic. Not only has it got the prettiest looking label ever to grace a record, but the music is worth a listen too - the first track is that Jim Webb song about PF Sloan. Now PF Sloan is a person I'd like to interview - in fact there are several people who I would like to talk to for about 3 days... John Phillips, John Sebastian, Eric Von Schmidt, Peter Stampfel, Peter Galloway, Tom Rush, Bob Dylan, Fred Neil, Ed Freeman, well, you know, the list is endless really.

What other periodical but Zigzag could have its production halted by the appearance of a thrush falling out of the chimney and flying round the room?

The directors of Oz are due to face British justice at the Old Bailey on June 22nd - buy their latest issue and support them. We all need Oz to prick the double standards of the straights who

condemn them - the same shits who say Oz is obscene probably read the Sunday gutter press filth, steal, dodge income tax, lie, cheat, get pissed, commit adultery, and break any other law or Commandment you could think of. Self righteous lot of pigs.

Another paper which you'll find interesting is Styng which is published from Barnsley and serves 'the north'. It costs 5p fortnightly. Send to Styng, at 12 Regent Street South, Barnsley, Yorks for a copy - enclosing 8p to include post.

An interesting fact: a conservative estimate of the minimum amount of marijuana smoked at Woodstock was over 2,800 lbs.

For details of a record lending library which stocks all the best and latest albums, write to IMSL, 17 Park View Court, Fulham High Street, SW 6.

Mick Softley came round the other day - his second album is ready for July release and sounds good. He's still living in his van.

We're very much behind with our letter answering - please bear with us... we'll get through them all soon.

There'll be a lot of vomiting on TV screens if Johnny Johnson's recording of Mr Tambourine Man gets on Top of the Pops. Unbelievable.

Due to the pressures of modern living, there is a vague possibility that I may be relinquishing the editorship of this worthy periodical to John Tobler, so I'll let him continue with this larger-than-usual Wanderings. Pete

Saw the Elvis film, which presented my one-time hero in a very Uncle Tom sort of environment. You know, he's a natural boy, unspoiled by his success, all the usual crap which I hoped was finally buried in about 1962. Still, he got off the ground a couple of times, and the really nice thing was to actually see the man, James Burton, who is now part of the Elvis backing group. Truly a king among guitarists and, strangely, quite a young cat. He doesn't steal the film like Leon Russell steals 'Mad Dogs', but everybody should know about James Burton, so try and get to see it if only for that. (We also have an article on James Burton next month).

Of interest to Taylor freaks will be the Alex Taylor album on Atlantic, where he is backed by Cowboy, who also have their own Atlantic album. Alex is little affected by the superstardom of the rest of his family, and comes over as a sort of superior soul singer. While on the subject, watch out in second hand shops for a Vanguard album by a group called 'The 31st of February', which has in its ranks Scott Boyer of Cowboy and Butch Trucks of the Allman Bros. Another album you may find is by the Evergreen Blueshoes on London - their leader was Skip Battin of the Byrds.

The Crystal Palace do was very pleasant except for the fact that rain coincided with the Floyd's appearance. Still, Mountain were what everyone had hoped, the Faces were inimitable despite being backed by Eddie Waring's commentary of the Rugby League Cup which somehow got relayed through their amps, and Quiver were quite beautiful. If they are not one of the world's biggest bands within a year, I'll stop lighting the fire with Sounds. Listen to 'I'm so glad to

be back on the road again! and 'Reason for staying! and rejoice that their is yet a gleam of light in this murky gloom of depressed record sales and general apathy. Their album is due in July - as are new desirables by Jackie Lomax and John Sebastian... so start saving.

Good news for oldies freaks like us is that the old Phil Spector produced albums are being re-released on Apple soon - the one I want is the Ronettes. On the subject of oldies, Alan Warner of UA, dusty and with strained eyes from searching innumerable vaults, has put together another great compilation called 'Deeper into the vaults', which contains 'It will stand' by the Showmen (one of the two rock'n'roll anthems together with 'Do you believe in magic' by the Spoonful), and other greats. Another to follow in the autumn too. Alan is also responsible for getting the new Eddie Cochran album on the road.

Some records: Carly Simon and Bridget St John have extremely acceptable albums on Elektra and Dandelion respectively, both pleasing in different ways, and both deserving a long listen. A single by John Kongos on Fly called 'He's gonna step on you again!' is very worthy of your notice. He's a sort of English answer to Santana, but without the tedium which that group can often engender. Produced by Gus Dudgeon, it says, and he's becoming a sort of Phil Spector (Anglo Saxon version), what with Elton John and Michael Chapman and now Mr Kongos. Gus was engineer on most of Mayall's Decca stuff and as well as knowing his art, must have a few stories to tell.

Rarely does the occasion occur when I feel sufficiently enthusiastic about a track to want to play it 6 times running, but I was so impressed by 'Give us back our country' by Joe Brooks that my wife got fed up with it and threatened to set the ferret on me. Give it a try - you'll recognize the album by the midget FBI men with machine guns on the cover. Not that Joe needs the bread - he's apparently a millionaire, having written the 'things go better with Coca Cola' jingle. Fax and info.

Interesting to note that the Edgar Broughton Band came 19th in the Big Band section of the Record Mirror poll. No doubt that was the band augmented by the choir of massed demons.

We chatted to Zal Yanovsky (ex of the Lovin Spoonful) at the Isle of Wight, but he seemed more interested in his quart bottle of Scotch, which, being in his mouth most of the time, rendered most of his comments unintelligible. One thing he did say was that he thought it very unlikely that his solo album was ever going to be released in England. He was wrong - it's on Kama Sutra 2316 003... some of it is weird, to say the least, but other parts are predictably excellent.

Finally a cautionary tale, or two, about Stackwaddy, who in their Mancunian way really live their communal existence like a northern Grateful Dead with attendant problems. First, they cut a new single which John Peel enthusiastically took to Clive Selwood's office to play. They put the tape on the machine and the amplifier blew up (shades of Beefheart breaking windows with his voice). Then they were playing a gig somewhere, and some person near the front of the stage wasn't paying enough attention, so John Nail, during an instrumental passage, left the stage and attacked the bloke, then calmly returned to the stage to resume the set. So there you are.

Take it easy til next month... John

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Mountain

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

ZZ: So you have the instrument basically in one speaker, and use varying amounts of echo to place it?

Felix: Well you can have echo return on the other side, yes, so that you can place it, or you can actually move it with a pan pot, which means basically that if you have equal amounts of something coming from left and right, it appears in the centre, but you can vary the amounts to move it around. Then, if you want two of one thing, you use a VFO and slow one side down - that changes the sound and pitch so that you can hear them both separately.

ZZ: What's a VFO?

Felix: A variable frequency oscillator, which slows down or speeds up the motor which runs the tape machine.

ZZ: So by slowing one side fractionally, you get enough separation?

Felix: That's right.

ZZ: I notice that you don't mess around with any production gimmicks like phasing, obvious channel switching and so on...

Felix: I lean towards very natural recording, yes - that's how Tommy Dowd and I approached Cream too. There were some effects used, but I'm more interested in figuring out a way to get a feeling.

ZZ: Who is the 'Palmer' who co-wrote some of the songs?

Felix: That's Leslie's lady.

ZZ: Some are dedicated - like the one to poor old Owen Coffin... who is the Sammy to whom 'Taunta' is dedicated?

Felix: Sammy was Leslie's dog - he was 14 years old when he died... he was a little grey poodle that lived through the Vagrants and so on... he meant something to us.

ZZ: Is that a theremin on that track?

Felix: No, that's a tiny German organ - a portable one - it's beautiful, isn't it... and that echo we put on it.

ZZ: Who is EMP of 'Travelin in the dark'?

Felix: That's my mother, who died prematurely two years ago.

ZZ: And JMH of 'Tired Angels'?

Felix: James Marshall Hendrix.

ZZ: What inspired that lyric?

Felix: Hendrix's death... in combination with the feeling of futility of the artist... that thing which everybody who plays has in common with one another. The lyric says it. You see, Jimi was always very interested in Mountain - he was the first person ever to hear Climbing. He and Leslie have a phenomenal amount in common.

ZZ: It makes me smile when I hear people saying that Mountain's music is nothing but noise - I don't think they can be listening too well.

Felix: Yes - that's bullshit. But I believe that some people only hear what they want to hear, rather than what's actually going

on.

ZZ: Did some critic actually call you and Leslie 'The Animal trainer and the toad'?

Felix: Yes, and Leslie wrote the song about my relationship to him.

ZZ: Would you say it's an appropriate allegory?

Felix: I don't know... it'll do.

PART SIX: STUFF I MISSED OUT IN THE OTHER FIVE PARTS

ZZ: Do you still get many requests to produce albums?

Felix: Yes I do; it's fantastic - I just wish I had time to do them all. I've been putting off Albert King for a year now, and I'm also working on Mylon Lefevre and Holy Smoke - he's a white gospel singer who grew up with Dylan... he broke away, and now he's a freak. That's for Columbia.

ZZ: Do you tend to find that critics think that Mountain's biggest musical asset is your association with Cream?

Felix: Well, if they do, fuck 'em, because we're really involved in what we're doing and we love it despite what anybody wants to say. I saw a report today that said we were exhibitionist or something like that - well, if that's what the cat saw, then indeed that's what we are... you know?

ZZ: Are audiences more demanding in



1963

Fred Neil & Vince Martin album 'Tear down the walls' on Elektra (bass and vocal)
Casey Anderson & the Realists - 'More pretty girls than one' on Atlantic (bass and vocal)

1964

Tom Paxton's first two Elektra albums (guitar and bass)
Fred Neil album 'Bleecker & McDougall' on Elektra (bass)
Tim Hardin - produced various tracks on his first Verve album
Tom Rush's first Elektra album (bass)

Mimi & Dick Farina - their second Vanguard LP 'Reflections' (bass and arranger)
Richie Havens - arranged 'Morning morning' on his Verve 'Mixed Bag' album
Buffy Sainte Marie - did arrangements on Vanguard album 'Little wheel spin and spin'

1965

Ian & Sylvia - played bass and arranged tracks on Vanguard album 'Play one more'
Joan Baez - bass player/arranger on various Vanguard albums
Mississippi John Hurt - bass player/arranger on various Vanguard albums
Also played with the Original Rag Quartet during the period 65-67

1966

Lovin Spoonful - played bass on various Kama Sutra tracks, but wasn't sure which ones
Youngbloods - produced and arranged 'Youngbloods' and 'Earth Music' albums on RCA
Devil's Anvil album on Columbia 'Hard Rock from the Middle East' (producer and arranger)
Tim Hardin - played bass on 'If I were a carpenter' on Tim Hardin 2 on Verve

1967-69

Cream - producer, and sometimes writer on Atlantic albums: 'Disraeli Gears' 'Wheels of Fire' 'Goodbye' 'Best of Cream' 'Live Cream'
Hamilton Camp - producer/arranger of Warner Bros album 'Here's to you'
Vagrants - producer and arranger of Atco single 'A sunny summer rain' 'Beside the sea'
Dino Valente - produced various cuts which later appeared on his Epic album

1968

Kensington Market - produced and arranged two Warner Bros albums (not released here)
Jolliver Arkansaw - produced, arranged and played on Windfall album 'Home'

1969

Jack Bruce - producer and instrumentalist on 'Songs for a tailor' Atlantic album
Leslie West - producer, arranger and bass player on his solo Windfall album

1970

Mountain - producer, arranger, bassplayer, leader of group; 'Climbing' album (Windfall)
David Rea - producer, arranger, bassist on Capitol album 'Maverick Child'

1971

Mountain - 'Nantucket Sleighride'
The Who - various tracks so far unreleased

America?

Felix: Well, New York audiences are tough. One time at the Fillmore we kept getting called back by a frantic audience and it got to the point where Leslie was throwing up at the side of the stage. But they were very good, because I went out and explained and they just said fine.

ZZ: You almost play yourselves to death then?

Felix: Sometimes we do - I've seen Leslie looking deathly ill after shows... I suppose that's the 'exhibitionist' bit coming out in us.

ZZ: Apart from a couple of tunes, the organist keeps well in the background and just gives body to the sound...

Felix: Yes - it's textural... it's carefully used because if it's not it could easily get obtrusive, which is not what it's there for. It's there to add colour and texture, and in that respect, I guess it's unique.

ZZ: You once said 'the key is dynamics'. What exactly did you mean? A combination of volume/motion/zap...

Felix: Yeah - and theatre... the whole thing I guess. But we do have a maximum volume, which we don't exceed, and we can also play very, very softly... so we are trying to use the whole range of dynamics as much as we can, and we're still developing it. It's difficult, because when my bass is turned up, it does everything but jump right out of my hands.

ZZ: What is that bass you play?

Felix: It's a souped up Gibson Violin bass - but it's very souped up, with different capacitors... it's really a hairy one.

Pete

Cover photo of Leslie West, photo on page 5, and photo of Felix Pappalardi on page 7 were all taken by HOMER SYKES.

'Nantucket Sleighride' is on Island 9148.

Here is a list of records which Felix was connected with:

It's a fuckin' gasser of a record... one of the rare ones which gets more refined the more you hear of it.

Hugh Nolan-IT

Just possibly the most important pop record issued in years. The most stylistically exciting piece of rock music since the Who's 'Tommy'.

Mick Watts-MELODY MAKER

As far as I'm concerned it's one of the best albums to show up this year or any year.

Lenny Kaye-ROLLING STONE

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